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THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

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THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

BASIL MATHEWS



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MATHEWS
THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	9
PROLOGUE: JESUS' WORLD AND OURS	11
I. THE LIFE OF THE HÓME	19
II. THE DRAMA OF EVERYDAY	29
III. HIS NATIVE LAND	44
IV. THE PANORAMA OF HIS PEOPLE	62
V. THE GREEK WAY OF LIFE	74
VI. THE ROMAN EAGLES	83
VII. PAUL: HEBREW ORATOR, GREEK WRITER, ROMAN CITIZEN	96
VIII. PAUL'S PICTURES FROM LIFE	113

ILLUSTRATIONS

A bazaar in Nazareth	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
A town in Palestine	14
A notice-board on a pole by the Virgin's Well at Nazareth	14
The olive harvest in Palestine	26
Barley harvest	36
The fisherman of the bay where Peter was called holds out his net (of exactly the type used by Peter). His little home is in the background	42
Fisherman with throw-net in the bay near Beth- saida, where Peter fished with a throw-net	42
The outlook from the city of Samaria across the hills of Samaria	50
The pillars of Herod's judgment hall in Sebaste, the name that he gave to the city of Samaria	50
A hillside street in Nazareth	60
Galileans in a fishing boat between Capernaum and Bethsaida	68
The view from Bethlehem, with Herod's Aque- duct in the foreground. This carried water to his palace in Jerusalem	68
The steep limestone Hills of Jericho, with the Ruins of Jericho in the foreground	80
The terraced hillside on which Bethlehem stands	92
The restored synagogue at Capernaum	92
From the mountains above Antioch, looking down the Orontes River to the port from which Paul and Barnabas sailed	102
Athens, with Mars' Hill in foreground	122
A street in Corinth	122

PREFACE

THE adventures and words of Christ and of the greatest of His followers have become much more real and living for me by the experience that has come during some twenty years of repeated visits to the lands in which they lived and worked. If you travel on foot and on horseback, by light wagon and by ship, day after day and month after month, often in the company of devout scholars who have lived in the land, from Rome across Greece and Asia Minor to Palestine and Transjordan, with the books of great historians and archaeologists as a guide and the Bible always in your hand, new insights cannot fail to visit your spirit.

This small book is an attempt to share such insights with those who may not have had the opportunity of seeing the lands and the peoples or of studying the literature; but who may wish, either for their own satisfaction or for their equipment as teachers, to look across that illuminated landscape.

The enchantment of the subject is as inexhaustible as its range and depth. This book is a miniature sketch of a very spacious landscape. The touchstone used to determine what should be omitted and what included has been throughout the practical one of serving the need of the youth or the teacher who wishes first to understand and then to interpret to those still younger the Person who himself gives meaning to all life.

BASIL MATHEWS.

PROLOGUE

JESUS' WORLD AND OURS

STROLLING through Nazareth one day I suddenly came upon a notice board on a pole:

SPEED LIMIT
THROUGH NAZARETH
10 MILES PER HOUR

The notice was in English, Hebrew, and Arabic—the languages of the government, the Jews, and the general population. My mind leaped back to the record of a notice painted on a piece of wood by order of a Roman ruler over Palestine and nailed on a cross to tell the crowd who the Criminal was. That notice, you remember, was in the three languages: Latin, Hebrew, and Greek—the speech of the government, of the Jews, and of the cosmopolitan population.

The parallels between Jesus' day and ours are startling and impressive. When, for instance, Pontius Pilate sent soldiers to set up the images of the Roman emperor on the Tower of Antony above the courts of the Temple, he was attempting precisely the goal to which in this twentieth century Nazi rule in Germany, Japanese rule in Korea, and Fascist rule in Italy are moving; and toward which even the governments of so-called democratic lands tend. That

goal is the control by government of the whole of man's life, even to deciding the Deity whom he shall worship. The thoughts in man's head today, as well as the enthusiasms in his heart, are being increasingly molded by the Nation-State. Jerusalem and Galilee two thousand years ago were burning centers of that same fight for the control of the soul of man. For the Jew alone in all the Roman Empire worshiped a totalitarian God, and therefore he alone was bound to resist to the death the command that he should worship the symbol of a totalitarian State in the image of the emperor. When the man in the Temple court asked Jesus before a crowd of pilgrims from all over the empire, "Is it right for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not?" a supreme problem of the twentieth, as well as of the first, century was posed.

The Jewish emphasis on race purity in Jesus' day and on the divine gifts of the Jewish race has very striking parallels in the twentieth century. Indeed, in Germany that same theory of race purity is now a scourge with which to flay the backs of the Jewish people there. Jesus' teaching challenges our imperialist and nationalist world as drastically as it challenged His own. Under the French, British, Dutch, and American imperial rules today fierce fires of nationalistic self-determination burn in the hearts of the subject peoples. India and Morocco, in the twentieth century, display national heats strikingly similar to the Zealot flames in Galilee and the rebel risings against Rome that brought thousands of Galileans to be crucified or chained as galley-slaves in the service of the empire.

Subtler yet equally vital parallelisms between the world in which Jesus lived and that of our own time reveal themselves as we try to feel the pulse of life in His time.

A universal restless curiosity about life ran through His world as it does through ours. The tireless inquisitiveness of the Greeks found itself free to move across the face of a world which the Romans had opened to man's travel. Sports and athletics then, as now, ran like wildfire everywhere. In the gymnasia in Antioch or Corinth, Alexandria or Marseilles, young men boxed, ran, jumped, and wrestled. They also talked there of everything under the sun, from the latest "star" gladiator or boxing champion or the chances in the horse and chariot races, to the last rumor about a Roman general who was said to be plotting to become a dictator on his own account. Olympic games brought the greatest athletes from all over the Mediterranean world to run in the stadium, round which tens of thousands of spectators sat or stood. The winners were "written up" by brilliant poets and their statues carved by the best sculptors. The theaters were crowded with people sitting under the blue sky to laugh at the comedians playing Aristophanes' *Frogs*, or to experience the suffering that punishes sin in the tragedies of Aeschylus, and the tragic rightness of the divine law in the life of man as it sweeps through the drama of Sophocles—tragedies in whose bleakest valley of shadow is some gleam of a divine plan. Those plays were performed in the theaters of the Greek cities of the Decapolis as Jesus walked through them with His disciples.

Goods came over the Roman roads and across the peaceful seas to the cities of the Empire. In Caesarea, on the coast of Palestine, where Pilate lived in the Roman citadel, you could buy a steel blade, tempered and sharpened in Damascus, corn grown in the Nile Valley, or a carpet woven in Babylon. If Pilate's wife wanted to buy a toy for a baby to cut his teeth on, she could even get a lovely carved ivory ring that had come on camel-back across the roof of the world from China.

If a young Indian of the twentieth century could go back nearly two thousand years to the world in which Jesus lived, and could walk over the fields with a Phoenician farmer working among the foothills close to Tyre, or enter the little home of a Roman soldier in the garrison at Caesarea on the Palestine coast, or talk with a Greek shopkeeper in one of the cities of Decapolis, he would be startled to discover many things wonderfully familiar to him.

Going with the farmer by the edge of the plowed fields, he would notice a tiny shrine for the god who protected the crops. The farmer would point to that stone, to this tree, or to yonder well, and tell him that it was inhabited by a good or an evil spirit. Familiar with the thousands of gods of Hinduism, the youth would discover in the Graeco-Roman world of Jesus' day—as a Greek poet wrote—that the air was so full of gods that you could not thrust an ear of corn in without touching one. The Romans even had—as India has—a god to whom a thief prayed for success in his burglaries. The Indian would see in the home of the Roman centurion the little room where his family spirits, the Lares, dwelt, and he would notice

the little stone images: all parallel to the *puja* or prayer room in his own home in India. The Indian youth too would be startled to find the Roman father relying on his heir to carry on ancestor worship. The Roman parent would be in an agony exactly like that of the Indian father if the son forsook his old religion and so was unable to perform the ceremonies upon which his father's peace in the next world depended.

In the midst of that Roman-Greek world the Indian would see the Jewish synagogues in every city; he would hear the Jews speak of the one true God whose worship canceled out all these false idols. He would remember that in his own India are Mohammedans, nearly seventy millions of them, with their mosques from whose minarets the cry goes over the roofs of the city that "There is no God but God" and where no idol may be worshiped. The Indian would see, moreover, in Capernaum or Sidon, Samaria or Jerusalem, just as today in Calcutta or Bombay, Colombo or Madras, clever young men who had drunk deep of the wine of philosophy and who, intoxicated with new ideas, scoffed at all the old faiths, whether they were the superstitions of the ignorant or the worship of the one true God.

Another strange parallel would also strike the young Indian's mind as he saw in Palestine men from the cities on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, the Thames and the Nile, the Euphrates and the Seine, as well as from the edge of the Sahara Desert, and heard that all of them were within the Roman Empire. He would remember that, in the streets of Madras or

Bombay, he meets men from the banks of the Thames and the Zambesi, the Saint Lawrence and the Niger, as well as from the fringes of the Australian desert, and discovers that they are all citizens of one empire whose territory includes a quarter of the earth's land surface and nourishes a quarter of the human race. The same thing was true in Jesus' day. The Roman centurion at Capernaum who built a synagogue there with the architectural proportions of a Roman basilica; the armed sentinels on the Tower of Antony overlooking the Temple courts in Jerusalem; the Roman emperor whose desire for a census, we are told, determined the place of Jesus' birth; the Roman procurator who reluctantly ordered His crucifixion; and the Roman soldier who drove the nails through His hands and His feet on the cross—all speak to us of the fact that Jesus' earthly life never moved for a moment beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire. His great follower Paul went from Tarsus (whither Cleopatra had come in her barge, with its golden poop and silver oars, to visit Mark Antony) to Jerusalem and thence, through Damascus and Antioch by Cyprus and Asia Minor, to Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. The roads on which he "footed it,"¹ from the Via Egnatia between Philippi and Thessalonica to the Appian Way from Capua to Rome, were made and policed by Rome, the seas that he sailed were swept free of pirates by Rome, and Paul himself, although of Jewish blood and of Greek as well as Hebrew speech, was proud to announce himself a free-born citizen of that empire.

¹ The exact translation of Luke's word *πεζοπορ*.

Thus in the first century Rome, by its roads, its unified administration, its common and steadily expanding citizenship, its provision of one official language (Latin) and one commercial and cultural language (Greek), was linking up the widespread, scattered peoples of the Mediterranean world, much as Britain is doing in India and, indeed, in all other parts of its commonwealth of nations.

The Indian in Palestine would find, as he questioned the philosophers, that a prevailing trend in their thinking taught that man moves through endless spirals of reincarnation controlled in direction by the nature of his life at each stage—whether good or bad. In this he would recognize a close parallel to the Hindu doctrine of *Karma*.

More startling still would it be to the young Indian if he found himself in the midst of an excited group of first-century Zealots or Nationalists in, say, Sephoris among the Galilean hills. As he heard them speaking angrily against the alien imperial rule from the distant city of Rome by men of another race, longing for the day when their country should throw off the yoke of the imperial power and the people rule themselves, the very words would seem almost identical with those that he heard as a student in college in Calcutta, as he and his friends argued vehemently for Home Rule for India and the thrusting of British power from the land.

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We now go to set foot in the home where Jesus lived as a boy, the little town in which He grew up,

18 THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

to watch the beasts and birds, the flowers and the crops that He saw. Then we shall look out across the whole land, the geography and history which molded its people, and finally survey again that empire of which Jesus was a subject.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF THE HOME

WHEN the boy Jesus waked in the morning, He rolled up the woven mat on which He had slept and put it away in the alcove of the wall where the mats of all the family remained during the day. Going to the wooden door and lifting the latch, He saw the rays of the morning sun lighten the crest of the western hill up the northeastern slope of which Nazareth climbs, before the sunshine came down into the deep saucer where the town lay.

The lowest point of the town was (and is) the public threshing floor of smooth bare rock, 1,155 feet above sea level. The houses climbed up the slope until they reached 1,500 feet above sea level. The ridge above them rose 150 feet higher still. In the valley and on the lower slopes of the encircling hills were fig orchards, groves of olives, and terraced vineyards. Above these the sparse grass and herbs were nibbled by the wandering sheep. All this Jesus could see when He climbed the stone steps that led up the outside of the wall of the house, from the courtyard to the flat roof.

The house was probably built of stone, as that was plentiful in those limestone hills. Not far away, down on the edge of the Plain of Esdraclon, where stone was scarcer, the houses would probably be of mud mixed with straw. The flat roof of the house in which Jesus lived was held up by beams mortised together in

a strong frame made by Joseph. Lighter lath-wood was laid over these beams, and then thin branches and twigs of thorn and brushwood were covered with mud and clay. This was beaten and flattened when wet until it made a hard surface on which the family could sit in the cool of the evening, or even sleep at night.

Joseph was not only a carpenter; he built the wooden framework of houses and barns. We might expect, then, that his home would be especially well built. The room inside might have one half of the floor raised some eighteen inches higher than the other half, with the donkey stabled in the lower part and feeding from a manger of mud molded on the edge of the upper half of the room. Alternatively, and more probably with an artisan, there might be just one room with a flat floor and a small stable adjoining the house outside.

Tall hollow grain bins were made in the walls of the room. The front of each bin was of dried mud and straw. A hole at the bottom edge of the front was plugged with a piece of wood. One bin would be filled with barley and another with oats or wheat. When Mary needed grain to grind for the daily bread, she held a circular wooden measure with a flat bottom under the hole, pulled out the wooden plug, and let the grain run into the measure until she had what was wanted, when she stopped the flow by thrusting the plug in again. In another corner of the room stood the tall, gracefully curved water-jars made of rough earthenware and unglazed. The fact that they were slightly porous had the curious effect

of keeping the water inside cooler than the air outside. Another and smaller jar contained olive oil for the lamps and for use in cooking.

A strongly made wooden chest, probably lined with cedar, stood on one side of the room. This held the best robes of the family, including, for instance, Mary's valuable wedding-dress and the silver and gold ornaments that went with it. These were handed down from mother to daughter through generation after generation. The lid of the chest had to fit very closely so that the moth could not get in to destroy the fabric. Jesus knew the damage that the silvery fish moth did (Matthew 6. 19-22; Luke 12. 33). Part of the decorations inherited by Mary from her mother would be a string of silver coins which she would wear hung across her forehead. It was always possible for the chain to break, and then the woman wearing it might lose one of her ten coins. This ruined the headdress and spoiled her heirloom. So, as we read in the parable, she lit her lamp, she swept with a besom in every nook and corner until, finding the coin, she was so thrilled that she ran out to tell her neighbors (Luke 15. 8-9). The fact that Jesus told this parable so vividly suggests that at some time He had been very much moved by the distress of a woman who had lost her heirloom, possibly His mother or a close relative.

In a niche in the wall was an oval hollow object of earthenware with a raised hole at one end, through which a piece of wick appeared. This simple little lamp was filled with olive oil and gave what flickering light the house had after dark. The lamp was set on

22 THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

a stand when lighted. In a workman's home this stand would be a flat stone projecting from the wall. It is to such a lampstand that Jesus referred in His humorous question in Mark 4. 21, as well as Matthew 5. 15-16. (See also Luke 8. 16 and 11. 33-4.) The Greek word used for the lamps carried by the wise and foolish virgins is quite different, meaning either "lantern" or "torch."

There were no chairs in the house and the family took their meals sitting cross-legged on mats spread on the floor round a tray of beaten metal, unlike their more wealthy neighbors who reclined on cushioned divans round a low, fixed table. The house had no fireplace.

The whole family slept on the floor. The "bed" was made by laying down a mat woven of rushes or of straw, and on that were flung some sheepskins or goatskins on which to lie, while the cloak worn during the day would be thrown over as a covering. If it were very cold, some goatskins or sheepskins would be laid on top as well. Jesus referred to the woven mat in telling the man to take up his bed and walk (Matthew 9. 6; John 5. 8-9). In the case of the four men carrying the sick man to the housetop and letting him down through the roof, the word used for "bed" means "stretcher" or "couch." Sometimes among the richer people a bed on a portable frame of wood with short legs was used. Jesus, for example, referred to putting the lamp under the bed (Mark 4. 21).

When Jesus was a small boy He went in the morning with Mary to the one well-spring in Nazareth.

The water gushed out of the side of the rock. Mary took one of the water-jars and carried it on her shoulder to the spring, where she met a number of young mothers and older girls fetching water for the many houses in Nazareth. There the gossip of the town was exchanged. Mary, like all the ordinary people born in Galilee, talked a language called Aramaic, which is closely related to Hebrew. Having filled her water-jar, Mary placed a small round woollen pad on her head. Setting the jar there, she balanced it as she walked barefoot home again, with Jesus walking alongside.

Carrying water was, and is, essentially a woman's work in Palestine. If, however, a man is living alone and has no help, or if his wife is ill and no neighbor can fetch water for her, he will go to the well. When walking with a friend who has lived in Palestine for a third of a century, I saw a man in Nazareth walking toward the Virgin's Well with an empty water-jar on his shoulder. This was only the second time in all those more than thirty years that my friend had seen a man carrying a jar. This throws light on the arrangements Jesus made for the Last Supper. It was necessary to keep the place of the meal secret, as the Sanhedrin wished to arrest Jesus under cover of night; it was also necessary to guide Peter to the place. Jesus therefore arranged that a man with a water-jar should be at a given meeting-place to lead the disciples to the right house. A man carrying a water-jar was a sufficiently natural sight not to raise suspicion, yet it was certain that he would not be duplicated (Mark 14. 13; Luke 22. 10).

24 THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

On reaching home, Mary filled the measure with grain from the bin in the wall (see p. 20). Going outside the house into the courtyard she sat with a neighbor by a small stone mill. This consisted of two circular flat stones some eighteen inches in diameter, one lying on top of the other. From the middle of the top of the lower stone an axle jutted straight up. This went through a hole in the middle of the upper stone. The upper stone could thus revolve freely on this axle, its lower surface grinding against the top surface of the lower one. A handle was fixed to the top of the upper stone. The neighbor took hold of this handle with one hand, and Mary poured grain into the hole through which the axle jutted. The neighbor, probably helped by Mary, turned the top stone. The grain was ground to coarse whole-meal flour and made its way out at the edges onto the mat on which the little mill stood. When enough grain had been ground into flour, Mary gathered it into a bowl.

Pouring water into this basin, Mary mixed the flour into dough. Taking a small portion of yeast or leaven she thrust this into the sponge. Jesus, staying to watch this, would see the leaven working in the lump and making bubbles that heaved in the mass, lightening and sweetening it so that it was transformed. It was this experience that He used later to give a picture of the gradual transformation of all human society by the influence of the kingdom of God, for example, Matthew 13. 33. The bread used at the Passover was unleavened, for example, Matthew 26. 17.

In the courtyard not far from the mill was an oval mound made of mud and straw shaped and like a beehive, with a small doorway in the side. On the ground within the hollow mound Jesus could see a low, slightly curved metal lid with a handle. If He lifted the handle, He would see under the lid a hollow, the floor of which was covered with pebbles. Mary pushed into this oven twigs and little branches of thorny shrubs, with dried grass, and even dried camel dung. These ovens are referred to by Jesus (Matthew 6. 30 and Luke 12. 28), when speaking of "the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven." The word "grass" is simply a general term for the wild thistles, herbage, and little thornbushes.

Mary set fire to this inflammable material, and it blazed up. Meanwhile, tearing away a piece of the dough, she beat or rolled it into a very thin pancake. She put this on a circular cushion-pad, and scraping the hot ashes from the metal lid, she picked that up with a swift movement and slapped the wafer-thin pancake, about eighteen inches in diameter, onto the hot stones, leaving it there a few minutes. Then with a deft practiced movement she swept it up again with the pad and replaced it by another pancake. These thin loaves she placed on a tray by her side, thus making a pile of bread for the family. Sometimes there is no pebbled floor, but the fire heats the hard mud walls of the oven and the loaf is slapped onto those hot walls and so baked.

With their bread the family ate cheese made from either goat's or cow's milk, flavored with olives from

the gnarled old trees with their gray leaves. The dessert would often be fresh figs from the smooth-trunked silvery-branched fig trees with their thick green leaves. Dates were usually brought across the deserts from the east or the south.

The salt did not come from the sea but from the rock-salt cliffs some six miles long on the southwest of the Dead Sea at the south end of the Jordan Valley (for Jordan Valley see Chapter III). The water of the Dead Sea itself is so full of salt that three pounds of the water yield about a pound of salt. The fact that salt was used to preserve olives and other foods and thus keep them from corruption is suggested in Jesus' phrase "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5. 13). When the salt loses this power, it is useless, for example, Mark 9. 50. The salt would be used also for preserving fish and meat such as lamb and kid and calf, but the poorer people could not afford much meat.

At meal times in Jesus' home small, flattish, glazed earthenware dishes would be placed on the large tray. A thick broth poured into these dishes was eaten by each person tearing off a piece of his thin bread loaf and curving it into a sort of spoon to lift a mouthful of the food, as, for example, in the Last Supper. The dishes, of course, needed to be washed up after the meal. Jesus would remember what His mother said about washing the outside of the bowl and tray (the cup and platter) and leaving the inside dirty.

There were four boys in the family besides Jesus, and at least two girls. The names of the boys were James, Jude, Josés, and Simeon (Matthew 13. 55;

Mark 6. 3). With five boys in the home no wonder tunics were torn. The cloth was made from wool clipped from the Galilean sheep, combed, cleaned, spun, and woven into cloth by the weaver whose loom Jesus could see as He went along the narrow, steep street. Mary explained that this new wool cloth shrinks when it is washed, so that if you use a piece of new unshrunk cloth to mend a tunic which has shrunk through being worn in the rain, then the next time it rains, the patch will shrink and tear away from the shrunk cloth of the garment, "and so a worse tear is made" (Matthew 9. 16).

The ordinary clothes worn by men and boys were a shirt or long tunic, quite simple and straight from the neck to the calves, with short, loose sleeves; a girdle, made either of leather or woven of camel's hair, was wound two or three times round the waist and the end tucked in. Money was carried in a pouch or a corner of a kerchief in the girdle. The Greek word translated "purse" in Matthew 10. 9 and Mark 6. 8 is actually "girdle." If a dagger or a knife were carried, that also would be stuck in the girdle. The shirt was pouched in front above the girdle, and into this pouch was put the bread and olives carried to the field for the midday meal, or the seed that a man was going to sow, or the shepherd would put there a newborn lamb to carry it (Isaiah 60. 11). This pouch is referred to in Luke 6. 38, where the word "bosom" is used. A man setting out to work in a field or vineyard hitched his tunic up under the belt as far as his knees, as in the phrase "gird up your loins."

Over the shirt or girdle Joseph (or even a boy

when going a journey) would wear a cloak of camel's hair or goat hair or wool. This was simply a long piece of material with the sides folded in and sewn along the top. It thus hung over the shoulders with no sleeves; there were slits some way below the top through which the arms could go. At night the cloak became the traveler's blanket. The headdress consisted of a large napkin of either white or colored material up to a yard square, folded diagonally into a triangle with the point at the back. A thick, coarsely woven circle of rope made of camel's hair would rest on this to keep the headdress in position. This is a very practical headdress in a climate where the hot sun is dangerous at the back of the neck, and where in a gale it may be necessary to wind cloth round the face to protect it against sandstorm or hail. Sandals were worn on long journeys even by the poor, but ordinarily the children ran about, and men worked, barefoot. On going to the synagogue the orthodox Jews of Jesus' day took a praying shawl three feet by five feet with a tassel hanging from each corner, each tassel made of eight threads twisted together in five knots. This covered the head and shoulders in the synagogue while saying prayers, and was worn in obedience to the law (Deuteronomy 22. 12). The *talith* would be worn by Jesus only when He had become a Son of the Law at thirteen years of age.

The Sabbath clothes were made of finer material, and wedding garments were often made of beautiful silk.

CHAPTER II

THE DRAMA OF EVERYDAY

JOSEPH'S workshop was not in or alongside the house, but in the narrow, climbing street where the shops of the other craftsmen were. The iron-smith, the leatherworker, the corn merchant, the weaver, and so on, had their little booths in which they made their goods and also sold them. When Jesus was old enough, He went down to help Joseph in the shop, where he worked as carpenter and house constructor. Joseph sat on the ground and gripped the wood which he was working between his bare feet and with his strong toes. Pictures like that of Holman Hunt, with a modern bench, and so on, do not represent reality. For holding timbers together wooden nails were used. The carpenter had also a saw, chisel, hammer, mallet, and plane. There could be no better place than the carpenter's shop for educating a boy in the life of the whole community; for the drama of everyday was discussed by the men of all walks of life who came into the carpenter's shop.

The farmer who has broken his yoke came there, knowing that Joseph was a clever maker of yokes that fitted well on the shoulders of the oxen when they were plowing; his yoke was "easy" (Matthew 11. 29-30). A fat, boastful farmer came in and ordered the carpenter to build him a large new barn. A few days later the son of this swaggering rich man entered to

ask Joseph to supply a wooden bier on which to carry his father to the grave. A shepherd visited the carpenter to buy a new crook with which to lead his sheep. Then a householder wished to buy a well-made clothes chest to give to his son who was getting married. The most sacred thing that Joseph made was the cover (or ark, as it was called), in which were stored in the synagogue the vellum scrolls on which the law of Moses was written.

Jesus, watching Joseph, learned that wood is of different qualities and has to be carefully sorted in accordance with the work it is to do. It must be tough and springy if it is to be used in a plow, for instance, and hard enough to resist ants and other insects if used for a chest or a door. Watching and listening to men in all grades of life as they came into the carpenter's shop gave the boy Jesus at an early age an understanding of all sorts and conditions of men.

Going back home, Jesus noted that Joseph put his hand up as they reached the door and touched with his fingers a small tube fixed diagonally on the door-post. Joseph then put his fingers to his lips. (Orthodox Jews the whole world over do exactly the same today.) This tiny cylinder was called the *mezuzah*. Inside the box, Jesus learned, were words from Deuteronomy (6. 4-9 and 11. 13-21). These same words, with Exodus 13. 1-16, were also written on parchment and bound into a leather case which Jesus as a boy wore on his arm on going to the synagogue. Joseph wore them in a case on his forehead. The idea at the heart of this was to remind the Jew at all times of his dependence on God. Some men, however, desiring

to use the phylactery, as it was called, in order to make a strong impression on their fellow men, broadened it so that it should be more conspicuous, as in Matthew 23. 5, where Jesus has just come from disputing with the Pharisees, whom He accuses of this display of piety.

Just before sunset on the sixth day of every week (Friday according to the Christian calendar), a man called the *hassan* climbed to the parapet of the House of Gathering (synagogue) and sounded three trumpet blasts. This announced that in half an hour, at sunset, the Sabbath would begin. Whatever was being done, whether Mary was preparing a meal or mending clothes, or Joseph working at making a plow, or the shepherd or the farmer in the vineyard was at his task, or boys and girls were playing—all must be finished by sunset.

After sunset the fathers of the families went to the synagogue for the evening service at the beginning of the Sabbath. When Joseph returned, the family stood at the door of the little house while he said a prayer welcoming the Sabbath into the home as a bride. He took a cup of the very light wine made from their own grapes and diluted with water, and with it in his hands said the prayer of blessing for the Sabbath. Each drank from the cup. One of the children then walked round the circle with a jar of water having a small spout from which the child poured the water. Each held his or her hands under the running water. This stood for the cleansing of body and soul for the Sabbath. Then they took their supper before going to bed. Before the Sabbath be-

gan Mary had already prepared all the food needed for the next twenty-four hours, during which no work of any kind must be done, not even the lighting of a fire.

Early next morning all the family went down the narrow street to the synagogue. At that time the Galilean synagogues in the smaller towns, as well as in the larger ones, had a portico with pillars approached by wide steps. Inside the building, two rows of pillars made two aisles and the nave. The people sat on mats on the stone floor. In some of the larger synagogues, for example, Capernaum, a gallery at the back was provided for the women. Probably there was no gallery at Nazareth; in that case the women would sit separately at one side. On the end wall of the building was a beautiful woven curtain. Behind it was hidden the Ark containing the sacred scrolls. In front of this and toward the middle of the building was a raised many-sided platform with a reading desk on it. By this platform were seats facing the congregation—"the chief seats in the synagogue" (Matthew 23. 6; Mark 12. 39, etc.), where the leaders of the people sat. In the center sat the ruler of the synagogue. He did not conduct the service, but he arranged it. He chose the leader for the day and selected others to read appointed portions of the Law. A boy past the age of thirteen could be called on to read the Law when he had become a Son of the Law by going up to Jerusalem.

The service began with praise, by the people singing together, for example, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." The *hassan* would chant and the

congregation sing the responses. Most of the psalms in the Old Testament are written in a form in which a second phrase repeats the idea of the first in different words. This characteristic form of Hebrew poetry can be seen in almost any psalm, for example, 63 and 78. Seven readers were chosen, and the attendant went to open the Ark and bring out the scrolls. A thrill of excitement ran through the synagogue as many in the congregation rose and moved toward him in order to touch with their fingers the fringe that hung from the cover placed around the sacred scroll; then in reverence they put to their lips the fingers that had touched the covering of the scroll.

The number of times Jesus quoted from the contents of those scrolls indicates how much they meant to Him. His quotations, it will be found, are more from Deuteronomy than from any other scroll. Isaiah comes next. He quotes them in times of danger and in facing difficulties. Instances occur throughout His life, from the temptation in the wilderness to the crucifixion; and the fact that the passages came to Him at such times was due to His having memorized them as a boy. When hearing the scrolls read, Jesus was listening to some of the most wonderful poetry that has ever been written. After He went to the Temple at Jerusalem He became a Son of the Law, and was certainly called upon from time to time to read in the synagogue.

In the century following Jesus' life an educational reformer in Palestine created schools attached to each synagogue. This, however, had not been done when Jesus was a boy. The Law of Moses laid down

that each father had the responsibility of teaching his own boys. Most fathers were too busy and not clever at teaching. The habit, therefore, sprang up of selecting one of the men in the congregation who was a good teacher. The fathers then made such gifts to their fellow craftsman as would release him sufficiently for this task of teaching their sons. So Jesus with the other boys would sit on the ground with this teacher seated on a slightly raised platform facing them. They learned to write Aramaic letters with their fingers in the soft earth, and chanted aloud the letters they were writing and passages memorized from the scrolls.

II

The year was punctuated for Jesus as a boy by the feasts of the Hebrew people. These dramatize the heritage of the past. They are at one and the same time festivals and significant elements in the heritage of the nation.

At mid-winter came a very gay feast. Lanterns were lighted on every roof. People waved palm branches in the streets. It was the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. Judas Maccabeus, having destroyed the armies of the alien Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B. C.), had set up his own throne in Jerusalem and purified the Temple (164 B. C.), whose holy place the Syrian had defiled. This festival was also called the Feast of Lights, because every home lighted its lantern on the roof, and young folk marched through the streets with blazing torches. Jesus attended this feast in Jerusalem on at least one occasion (John 10).

When winter passed to early spring, the Jews celebrated at the Feast of Purim the overthrowing of wicked Haman by Queen Esther. Haman had tried to persuade the Persian ruler to destroy the Jews. The story was read aloud in the synagogue at this feast from the scroll of Esther. The boys shouted then (as they shout today) when the reader told how Xerxes, the Persian king, was persuaded by Esther to protect the Jews and hang Haman.

The Passover, held in the very early summer (called the Month of Ears because the ears of wheat appeared then), was the greatest of all the festivals. From every part of the Mediterranean world the Jews took pilgrimage to Jerusalem by road and sea. This festival celebrates God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery under the Pharaohs. In Palestine, Passover falls just before the barley harvest, which comes in late April or early May. Within a month, that is, in early June, the wheat harvest is garnered. These two swift harvests occur between the Passover week and the one-day feast of Pentecost, which falls on the fiftieth day from Passover, or on the first day from seven weeks after Passover.

From a boy's point of view, even more thrilling than these festivals was the Feast of Tabernacles or of Booths. This time of merrymaking and worship takes place in the open air, the people living in huts made roughly of twigs and branches of trees, or, in cities, sleeping on the roof in improvised huts of the same kind. It is the harvest thanksgiving for the fruits of the trees and vineyards, the olive, the grape, and the fig in particular. The tabernacles or huts

remind the people of the time they spent in tents, traveling across the wilderness from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Each one of the feasts dramatizes either an historical event or the gift of one or other of the harvests, or both, and in all these cases, as we see, emphasizes the dependence of the people on God and His special care for them. All through the year, and especially at these times, it came quite naturally to fathers and mothers to talk with their sons about God and His protection, His guidance and law. God is the Creator who made and rules the stars in their courses, and the God of history who had a definite purpose for Jews as a people and for each one of them as an individual.

III

On the hilltop overlooking Nazareth Jesus saw many of the animals and plants and the work that later entered into the picture-stories with which He taught truths, so simple that anyone can grasp their essential meaning for life, and yet so deep that the wisest philosopher cannot exhaust their riches.

The blazing carpet of scarlet anemones, with the quiet mauve and white of the wild cyclamen, and a month later the arrogant poppies and the pale yellow "owl-eyed" scabious, were more gloriously adorned than King Solomon (Matthew 6. 29; Luke 12. 27). Jesus watched the birds fly to and from their nests and the fox running into its lair. His allusion to them (Matthew 8. 20; Luke 9. 58) takes its meaning from the fact that, while places of refuge were definitely allotted by God to such outcast creatures as

foxes and jackals, the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head. He noticed how the birds gleaned behind the sower (Matthew 13. 4); He saw the sheep following the shepherd who knew the sheep by name and was known by them (John 10. 4). He knew how easy it was to blunder by divided attention into plowing a crooked furrow; the good plowman had to keep his mind concentrated on what he was doing and not turn to look back after putting his hand to the plow. Jesus was braced by the brisk wind which blew on the hilltop. The flowers and the corn and the trees bowed their heads at its passing, but no one saw the wind itself or knew whence it came or whither it went (John 3. 8). The beauties of the earth, the sunset, the miracle of re-birth after refreshing rain—all spoke to Him of the care of His Heavenly Father (Matthew 6. 26).

Jesus used to watch the farmers at their work; many of His parables show how intimately He knew their lives. The method of reaping was by cutting the grain with a sickle. The reaper grasped a handful of stalks in his left hand and cut them down with the sickle in his right, then gathered them in his arm and laid them behind him. The binder, who followed him, tied the stalks into sheaves with little cords of twisted straw made as he went along. He set these sheaves into heaps. Behind the reaper and the binder came the women and girls gleaning. Descriptions like those in the second chapter of the book of Ruth throw light on the references of Jesus. The heaps of sheaves were then laid on the backs of donkeys, which one sees today, walking along like

38 THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

small moving ricks, with only the lower part of the legs and the head and ears visible.

The sheaves were carried to the threshing floor, which was usually a circle of level hard-beaten ground, or, better still, a smooth rock perfectly clean. A circle of big stones surrounded the threshing floor to keep the straw from scattering too far. It was always open to the wind. The sheaves were unbound and thrown across the floor until about a foot deep. At the end of the threshing, generally by beating with flails, the grain, chaff, and broken straw were all mixed together. It was winnowed with large flat wooden shovels that were (and are) used to lift the mass and throw it into the air against the breeze. The wind blows the chaff completely away, the straw falls at a little distance, and the grain close to the winnower's feet. It is interesting today to watch the process still carried on in this fashion, sometimes against a background of large conical sheds made of mud and straw, in which the grain is to be stored when winnowed.

The last process is sifting. The sieve consists of a wooden circle enclosing a mesh of strips of camel hide. The mesh allows the grain to fall through, any unthreshed ears being held back, as are also pieces of stone or bits of clay. The one reference in the Gospels to sifting is Luke 22. 31.

Sifting was essential partly because of the vital difference between wheat and tares. Not only every man and woman but every boy sitting on the edge of the lake would grasp Jesus' teaching of the tares and the wheat (Matthew 13. 24-30 and 36-43). The tares, or darnel, is the only poisonous plant among the

graminae (cereal grain). The Latin name for tares is *lolium temulentum* ("drunken"). The Arabs call it *zawan*, which means "nausea." Bread containing even a very little of the flour ground from tares is injurious, causing dizziness and heavy sleep. In considerable proportion, it causes vomiting, convulsions, and death. Yet the plant when it first appears cannot be distinguished from wheat. It only becomes distinct when it reaches the stage of the ear. The roots of the tares spread under the ground and gradually suck the sustenance from the earth, thus impoverishing the wheat. The plant ripens a little before the wheat, and if allowed to seed itself, the ground is obviously ruined for the next year. The difference when it comes to actual seed is that the tare is a fraction smaller and is darker. Finely graded sieves are made therefore, so arranged that the tares go through and the wheat grains are held back.

The singular pungency of the truth that Jesus was explaining is brought home by the likeness of the good to the evil during the early stages, by the care needed in distinguishing the one from the other, and by the suffering caused by negligence or by the evil action of one sowing tares. To use Jesus' statement in another connection, "by their fruits" (or "by their seeds") "ye shall know them."

In the parable of the sower we read of the seed that fell among thorns. These would be both small thorn-bushes and thistles, of which three different varieties were found. There was the pink-flowered thistle with sharp spines (*notobasis syriaca*); a bright orange-flowered poisonous thistle (*scolymus macalatus*); and

a small yellow-flowered kind (*Carthamus oxycantha*).

The flowers of Palestine are very varied: three thousand known species exist. This variety is due partly to the extraordinary diversity of climate as well as of soil, from the snowy heights of the Lebanon, which are alpine, down to the tropical banks of the Jordan. There is no other place on earth that has such variety of climate in so small a space. It is interesting that where the writers of the Epistles (James 1. 10 and 11; 1 Peter 1. 24, for example) speak of flowers to illustrate frailty and the shortness of life, Jesus speaks of them for their beauty (Matthew 6. 28; Luke 12. 27). Palestinian flowers familiar in the West include anemones, crocuses, cyclamen, gladioli, hyacinths, irises, poppies, roses, and tulips, which grow fast under the strong spring sunshine after the rains, and are withered by the hot sirocco with equal speed.

The fruit harvest comes, as we have seen in our study of festivals, in the late summer or early autumn. Naturally, the exact period of harvest varies from the high-terraced limestone hillsides of Judea to the Jordan Valley. In Jesus' time the Plain of Gennesaret, at the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, which is over six hundred feet below sea level, yet open to the breezes from Mount Hermon, had such an astonishingly favorable climate that fig trees bore fruit, crop after crop, for as many as ten months in the year. Beside the gray-trunked fig trees, with their thick green leaves, were the groves of thousands of walnut trees with the nuts growing in their dark-green, pulpy, outer covering. Where the land began to rise to the hills, the gnarled, twisted trunks of the old

olive trees carried under their grayish-green leaves the harvest of oval olives. Nearer to the lakeside were the tall, bare, light-brown trunks of date palms, with the umbrella crest of broad, long, fleshy leaves protecting the heavy date clusters hanging from them.

On the terraced limestone hillsides of Judea the grape vineyards were spread, each vineyard surrounded by a protecting wall made of stones loosely lying one upon another without mortar. Today many of them are surrounded by prickly pear (a tall, fleshy cactus). Although this appears in many pictures of Biblical times it has no place there. The prickly pear was introduced into Palestine from South America in the sixteenth century A. D.

In the center of the vineyard was a high heap of unmortared stone with a flat top surrounded by a low wall. This was the "tower" on which the owner or one of his sons sat to watch against thieves (for example, Matthew 21. 33). The vines are pruned severely in December and January, and as you go through the vineyard after the pruning you see only the hard, gnarled, rough stumps. The ground around these roots is hoed in February or March, then "the vine putteth forth her tender shoot." In April and May the blossom is on the vines. It needs to be protected from insects and pruned where it is too lavish. In September the picking of the ripe grapes begins. Jesus' allegory of the vine (John 15. 1-10) goes back to the flow of the sap through the trunk or true vine into the branches and thus through the twigs to the leaves and the fruit. The fruitless branches are pruned off and used for firewood.

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard the employer strikes a bargain at sunrise for the men to work for a shilling a day. The second group go in at nine o'clock, the third at twelve, and the fourth at about three, the last group going in at five o'clock. Work goes on until sunset, after which darkness comes very swiftly. The picture in Jesus' story is obviously of high summer, as they speak of "the burden and heat of the day." The work might be either the beginning of the harvest or the busy time of thinning the grapes for ripening.

The other harvest of the Galileans was, of course, the all-the-year-round harvest of fish in the Lake of Galilee. As this lake is a part of the tremendous cleavage in the earth's surface which runs from Palestine to Central Africa, you find that the fish of the Lake of Galilee are like those in African lakes, some being found nowhere else in the world except these two areas. "Bethsaida" means "the house of fish," or "fish town." The fish collect in shoals round the shore where hot springs run into the northwest of the lake close to Bethsaida and Capernaum.

The principal methods of fishing were two:

1. The drag-net (Matthew 13. 47). This is a large net weighted all along the lower edge, with floats on the top edge. One end is taken by one boat and the other end by another, and it is let down to the lake. The two boats gradually row to the shore, drawing along between them the net, which curves in a semi-circle behind them until many fish are enclosed. The boats then come together, thus making the net a circle, and the contents are dragged ashore,



The fisherman of the bay where Peter was called holds out his net (of exactly the type used by Peter). His little home is in the background



Fisherman with throw-net in the bay near Bethsaida, where Peter fished with a throw-net

2. The second method is the throwing-net (Matthew 4. 18). This net is shaped like a parachute, to the center of which a cord is attached, while round the edge small lead weights hang. The fisher with the end of the cord in his left hand whirls the net round his head with his right hand. He then throws it up and out over the water with a twist of the hand that sets it circling. The lead weights by centrifugal force open the net, which falls outspread flat on the water. Swiftly the weights drop to the bottom of the lake, carrying the net down like a small round tent, covering, if the fisherman is lucky, a number of fish. He then pulls the cord which is attached to the center of the net. As it lifts, the lead weights swing together at the bottom, making the net no longer a parachute but a sack, which the fisherman then pulls ashore. This method is used for fishing in shallow water, the fisherman wading in to do his work.

Around the Lake of Galilee in Jesus' time the people were busy with catching and salting fish for export all over the Roman Empire. The Galilee salt fish were regarded as a special luxury for the tables of epicures. It is computed that on the shore of the lake at that time some twenty towns totaled one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The town of Taricheae took its name from a word meaning "salted provisions" and is generally regarded as having been the center of the salt-fish trade. The salt, as we have already mentioned, came from not far away, at the other end of the Jordan Valley by the Dead Sea. In Matthew 7. 10 we see that fish and bread formed the ordinary diet of the Galilean people.

CHAPTER III

HIS NATIVE LAND

PALESTINE has been a highway from the first faint rays of the dawn of history. It is a rocky causeway between two seas—the Mediterranean Sea on the west, the sea of desert sand on the east. One continent lies to the southwest of Palestine—Africa; another to the east—Asia. Palestine is the way from Africa to Asia.

Another continent that we now call Europe lies to the northwest. The land road from Europe to Asia runs across the north of Palestine. That, for instance, is the way by which Cyrus of Persia brought his armies west to fight the Greeks. Alexander the Great led his forces that way eastward into India. Both Greek (European) and Persian (Asiatic) led their armies through Palestine into Egypt (Africa). So Palestine is at the hub of three continents.

On the Nile in Egypt great empires rose; others became powerful on the Euphrates in Asia (the Babylonian and the Assyrian empires, for example). Palestine was the strategic bridge between those empires. Whoever controlled that bridge of Palestine had the better chance of mastering the enemy empire.

We are deluded if we think of Palestine as being off the beaten track. This is largely because, during the last four hundred years, the world's commerce has taken mainly to the seas, so the central position in

the world's strategy of the area between Constantinople and Cairo has been temporarily obscured. To-day Palestine moves once more toward the center of the stage. Now that mankind is going back to land transport, and aeroplanes dependent upon oil, fly over land air routes, the tide of strategic interest turns toward the eastern Mediterranean. The pipeline from the Middle East to Haifa is a significant symbol. In Jesus' day, as all through Hebrew history, the strategic position of Palestine was of capital importance: it is becoming so once more.

If we soared in an autogiro above Palestine, our first impression of a wild, lovely jumble of tumbled hills, lakes, river, and plain would, as we gazed, change to a sense of ordered sequence. We should discover at least six successive features, each fascinating in itself, and all, in their interaction, of thrilling significance. All six run in belts from north to south.

The first is the Great Sea. It may be objected that this is outside Palestine. But it governed, and in some ways still governs, the life of the land. The sea-borne commerce up and down between Jaffa on the south and Tarsus on the north via Caesarea, Sidon, Tyre, and the port of Antioch was in Jesus' time a vital factor in the life of the country. The sea was the highway linking it with the outer world of Roman rule, with Greek civilization and with general commerce. The sea still brings to the parched hills of Palestine those saturating dews and the sequence of rains that make life possible and often a sheer delight.

The sea plain, secondly, runs from the southern desert past Beersheba and Gaza northward to Haifa—

once the Bay of Acre. From the days of Samson down to General Allenby's march in the Great War this narrow plain between the blue sea and the tawny and green foothills of Judea has been the jugular vein along which the pulsating blood of Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Assyrian, French, and British empires has flowed. Pontius Pilate lived at Caesarea, then its principal port, in the time of Jesus.

This Philistine plain, as the southern part of it between the hills and the sea is called, gradually becomes narrower as it runs north. At last Mount Carmel's blunt head juts so close to the beach that there is only just room between the hill and the sea for the strategic road and some houses. The plain opens again northward at the Bay of Acca (Acre in the crusades) where the caravans of all the centuries have swung east for Capernaum, Damascus, and the Euphrates. At the Ladder of Tyre the maritime plain is broken. There is a mere cliff-cut road that carries you to the Phoenician coast, from which the daring seamen of Tyre and Sidon used to sail to Britain for tin twenty-five centuries ago.

✓ This Palestine coast line is one of the straightest on earth. No large natural harbors exist; and all artificial ones disappear in time. Why is this? All the tides and currents set northeastward from the Nile. These carry sand and mud from Egypt, so that in the long run every harbor has been silted up. In Jesus' time Herod made a marvelous artificial harbor at Caesarea. The mole, half a mile long, was so wide that two chariots could drive abreast on it. Much of the masonry remains today under the sea;

but there is no harbor. Tyre had two harbors, one on each side of the great rock on which the city was built ("Tyre" means "rock"), but the southern harbor is silted up. The splendor of Tyre is vividly described in Ezekiel 27.

All up the coast behind this long sea plain a tangled jumble of hills lifts itself eastward. These hills, although broken by ravines and plains, roughly make a third broad strip from north to south. They are, starting from the edge of the southern desert at Gaza and Beersheba, the hills of Judea in the south, the hills of Samaria in the center, and those of Galilee in the north, rising still farther north to the Lebanon and Mount Hermon. The Arabs call Mount Hermon "The Sheik" because it wears for a good part of the year a white turban of snow. Jesus lived and worked mostly in the Galilean hill country; he died on the Judean hills. Between the Galilean and Samaritan hills runs the Plain of Esdraelon. This is the one place that gives easy passage from east to west through this hill barrier. Here the commerce and the armies of Africa and Asia have flowed. Its blood-red soil has provided a battleground from the time of Deborah and the Pharaohs through the crusades and Napoleon to General Allenby. Our word "Armageddon" that is used to forecast the final clash of world forces comes from this plain, which is called at times the Plain of Megiddo (or Armageddon) from a town that was once on its fringe.

The deepest trough that exists in the earth's surface constitutes the fourth and the clearest-cut of all our land strips, the Jordan Valley. Seventeen feet

below sea level at its northern end, it sinks at the Sea of Galilee to six hundred feet below, then to the surface of the Dead Sea, which is twelve hundred and sixty feet below sea level. The intense tropical heat of this valley is shown by the fact that, although millions of gallons of water run down the Jordan into the Dead Sea every day, and there is no exit for that water, the whole flow is evaporated.

Between the Jordan and the eastern desert rise the rich, rolling hills of Transjordan, our fifth clearly marked belt. They are agriculturally richer than those of Palestine. They contained in Jesus' day nine of the ten Greek cities of Decapolis, which we have already noticed. This was the reservoir of enemy forces in the Old Testament days, when the Midianites, for instance, swarmed from Transjordan across the Jordan Valley and up through the Gap of Jezreel to be met by Gideon at the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon. The Midianites were the Arabs of their day in conflict with the Hebrews, both of them Semitic peoples.

A tawny, tumbled ocean of sand and bare rock closes the picture on the east as does the blue sea on the west. This desert is the sixth and last strip. Again it may be objected that the desert is outside Palestine; but once more the reply is that it affects the life of Palestine at every stage and in all its parts. Over the desert the camel caravans moved from the east bringing the silks and spices and dates and other products from the Farther East, as the ships brought the products of the West. Into the desert the great, tense, and heroic leaders of the peoples disappeared to listen to

the Voice that drove them to defy the tyrannies and assert the supremacy of the spiritual. It is no exaggeration to say that all human history has been changed by what men saw and heard and willed in the desert places, from Moses and Amos to Jesus and Paul.

The supremely significant geographical fact is that Palestine lies between the sea that brought the commerce and armies, the restless hubbub of civic business and imperial politics from Rome and Greece, and the desert in which great souls, wounded and angered by that life, found creative revolutionary Truth.

II

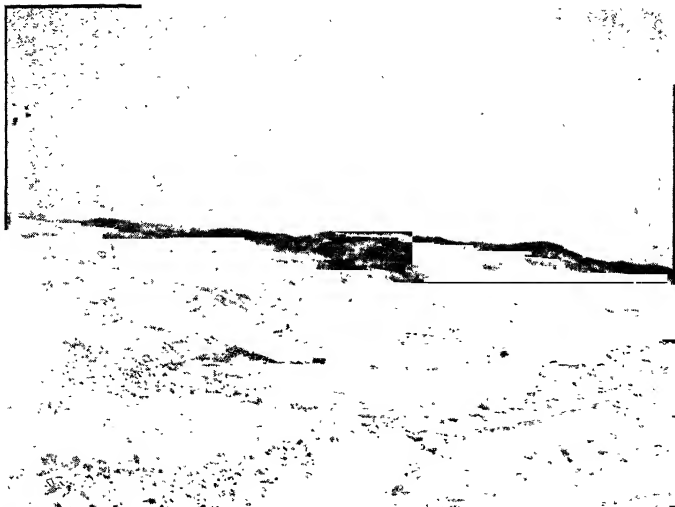
Across these six parallel geographical divisions of Palestine ran a multitude of paths, but there were also great and ancient highways, such as have been mentioned, running either straight across or diagonally over the country. As channels of international commerce and cultural intercourse they helped to make Palestine a nerve center instead of a remote oasis in the world's life.

The first and in some ways the most important ancient highway was called the Way of the Sea. It started from Acre, a port at the north end of what is now the Bay of Haifa, and ran through climbing valleys into the Galilean hills, where it swung due east near the strange pinnacles of rock called the Horns of Hattin, and plunged down the steep narrow gorge to the northern shore of the Lake of Galilee. That gorge is now deserted save for a few Bedouin tents, whose inhabitants lead sheep and goats over the sparse herbage, and the hyenas that haunt the

caves on the cliff sides. The Way of the Sea then passed eastward across the north end of the lake, through Capernaum, where a Jew named Matthew, hired by the Roman rulers, levied custom on the merchandise as Jesus passed by. The road then ran north for a little on the west of the infant Jordan, and, crossing the upper waters of that stream by a ford (over which the Romans later built a bridge), joined a road which climbed over the anti-Lebanon and struck northeastward to Damascus. This very busy road brought much revenue to the Roman authorities, who also, however, bore the cost of its upkeep. It made Capernaum, the center from which Jesus did most of His work, a place where Asiatics, Africans, and Europeans (to use our modern words) met and mingled. Jesus chose as the center of His ministry a city radiating influence in many directions, and visited by merchants and peasants of many nations.

Another road ran from Acre southward by the coastal plain. It passed the ports of Caesarea and Joppa, and that port of the southern desert, Gaza. Then it swung west over the desert into Egypt. This road, of course, was joined at Caesarea by the Judean hill road from Jerusalem, down which Paul was brought by Roman soldiers for trial.

From Jerusalem itself roads radiated in many directions. One struck north over the hills of Judea and between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, through the hills of Samaria, and across the Plain of Esdraelon into Galilee. Jesus frequently went up and down this route, which passes the Well of Jacob. Although the road just mentioned was the direct route, another



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

The Outlook from the City of Samaria Across the Hills of Samaria



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

Pillars of Herod's Judgment Hall in Sebaste
The name that he gave to the city of Samaria

road was often taken by the Jews when they were going northward and wished to avoid intercourse with the loathed Samaritans. This loop line first of all plunged steeply northeast from Jerusalem down into the Jordan Valley to Jericho. This section is the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan, and up it Jesus came from Jericho to Jerusalem for the triumphal entry before the Crucifixion. From Jericho the road then ran north along the Jordan Valley. Reaching the Gap of Jezreel, it turned back to the west and climbed into the Plain of Esdraelon. Crossing that plain it carried travelers to Galilee. Another road southward from Jerusalem passed through Bethlehem to David's ancient capital of Hebron. There it forked; one route dropped south to Beersheba and the southern desert and the other turned west to Gaza for Egypt.

These, then, were the main land routes. The Roman rule had greatly reduced the dangers from brigandage, but, as we know from the parable of the good Samaritan, these were not, as, indeed, they never have been, completely eliminated.

III

The sun, the rain, the wind, and the dew appear repeatedly in Jesus' teaching. The scorching heat of the sun, making it appear man's enemy, emerges in such references as to the withering of the young plants on shallow soil in the parable of the sower (Mark 4. 2f.; Matthew 13. 3f.; Luke 8. 5f.). The wind blowing where it listeth (John 3. 8) has remarkable effects. For example, on the heights of Jerusalem a

breeze comes up from the sea with extraordinary regularity and punctuality in the afternoon; this stream of air brings not only coolness on the hottest day but dews that are so heavy as to make a real difference to the vegetable and animal life. But during a period like the month of May, when the sirocco often blows from the east across the desert, man and beast and plant go limp and feeble. Fevers and ophthalmia sharply increase, and the flowers are almost burned up with the torrid heat.

A curious phenomenon of the wind occurs on the Lake of Galilee. In this deep cleft, six hundred and fifty feet below sea level and dropping at the Dead Sea to twice that depth, the tremendous heat makes the air rise, thus creating a vacuum. At certain times the cold air from Mount Hermon rushes down to fill this atmospheric void. This rushing tempest of wind lashes the waters of the Lake of Galilee into turbulent waves. Coming, as it were, down a funnel, the path of this rushing wind is narrow, so that a fishing boat nearly overwhelmed with the waves may pass within a hundred yards or so out of the tempest into calm water.

The rains, generally speaking, come with striking regularity. The "early rains" fall in October. They are immediately followed by the plowing and the sowing. The "latter rains" come in March and April and sharply stimulate the young crops. Between these come heavy winter rains in January. The summer months, that is, from May to August inclusive, are hot and rainless. Little rain falls in the Jordan Valley at any time of year. The Jordan itself is mainly fed by

the melting snows of Mount Hermon and great springs that break out as wide streams from the very roots of the mountain range; one, for example, at Dan and one at Caesarea Philippi.

On the alternation of these climatic features of rain and sun, wind and dew, the harvests depend, and with them, as we have already seen,¹ the festivals.

Wild animals came into Jesus' life very closely at the time of the temptation, when we are told that He was alone with the wild beasts (Mark 1. 13). The two beasts of prey mentioned in the Gospels are the fox and the wolf. The fox's possession of an "earth" is contrasted with the homelessness of the Son of man (Matthew 8. 20; Luke 9. 58), and the fox is mentioned as a type of cunning cowardice set on murder in the reference to Herod (Luke 13. 32). The wolf is the greatest enemy of the shepherd as he defends his flock. The shepherd has to be prepared for direct fighting with the wolf, and when Eastern shepherds employ a dog, it is not to round up the sheep so much as to warn of the presence of wolves and help to fight them off. The distinction between the hireling and the good shepherd is that the latter risks his own life fighting the wolf (John 10. 12). People who give false teaching under the cloak of religion are wolves who have put on sheepskin in order to get into the fold. Sir George Adam Smith was on the hills of Palestine years ago and came to one of those sheepfolds made of a circular wall of stone. He came round it and saw a great open hole in the wall big enough for the sheep to go through. He looked for the block of

¹ Chap. II.

stone or wood that would make the door; but he saw none. Then he saw the shepherd, who was a Moham-medan, and asked him, "Where is the door?" "Oh," said the shepherd, "I am the door." At night he rolled himself up in his shepherd's cloak and lay across that opening, and only over his body could anything harmful get to the sheep. When Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd," and "I am the door," that is not so much a change of metaphor as a change of picture showing different functions of the same shepherd.

Sheep in Palestine follow the shepherd and are not driven by him; this throws light on Jesus' thought with regard to leadership (John 10. 3, 4, and 16). That the voice of the shepherd is recognized by the sheep was confirmed by a Scottish traveler, who persuaded a Palestinian shepherd to change clothes with him. The traveler disguised as the shepherd called the sheep, but they took no notice. The true shepherd, disguised in Western garments, then called them, and they ran toward him in spite of his strange raiment.

The important distinction between the fold and the flock is blurred in the Authorized Version of the English Bible. In John 10. 1 and 16 we find in the Authorized Version the word "fold" three times. In verse 1 the Greek word represents fold in the strict sense of a walled enclosure, and Jesus used the word there to indicate that within the Jewish enclosure or sheepfold He has sheep of His own. The references in verse 16 are not to the physical fold, but to the flock of sheep; that is, Jesus has, among the non-Jewish

people, sheep who are outside the Jewish fold, but He will bring the Jewish and the Gentile sheep together so that there shall be one flock with one Shepherd. This is important, because obviously Jesus means that the unity will not be circumscribed by geographical boundaries, or race distinctions, or political divisions, but will be constituted by the fact that His sheep are drawn together by the voice of the one Shepherd. The distinction between the fold and the flock is made clear in the Revised Version of the English Bible:

Jesus evidently watched wild birds with sympathetic interest. He commends to a man faith in the care of God by asking him to consider the birds (Matthew 6. 26). They are contrasted with the Son of man as having nests (Matthew 8. 20; Luke 9. 58). The goldfinches, linnets, and sparrows were certainly in sight of both Jesus and His hearers when He spoke the parable of the sower at the north end of the lake. Doves were captured in the ravines of the Way of the Sea and carried on donkey-back fluttering in wicker cages to the Temple, where they were bought for a low price by the Temple authorities and sold for as much as ten shillings each by the profiteering high priest and his minions (John 2. 14 and 16; Matthew 21. 12; Mark 11. 15). Sparrows were served up cooked in the cheap eating-houses, and we get references to them in Matthew 10. 29 and 31, and Luke 12. 6 and 7.

Goats are only mentioned in the parable of the great surprise (Matthew 25. 32f.). The separation of the sheep from the goats has in it no note of criticism of goats as such. The point is that in the daytime

the sheep and goats pasture together, but are kept separate when folded at night. The goat in Palestine has long hanging ears, strong curved horns, and long black silky hair, which is used for making the black waterproof Bedouin tents.

In both of the references of Jesus to the camel the reference is to its size (Matthew 19. 24; 23. 24). This is natural, as the camel was the largest animal that He ever saw.

Poultry were kept by the common people of Palestine. Jesus, speaking of Jerusalem and the peril that overshadowed it, used the picture of the hen covering her chicks with her wings as she sees the shadow of the eagle across the sky (Matthew 23. 37; Luke 13. 34). The Roman "eagle" forty years later destroyed Jerusalem. The crowing of the cock appears only in the story of Peter's denial of our Lord and His foretelling of it.

Bees, whether wild or kept in hives, have always been common in Palestine. The first reference to the land mentions it as "flowing with milk and honey." This reference means more than appears on the surface. If there is milk, there must be pasturage for milk-bearing animals; if there is honey, there must be multitudes of flowers for the bees to gather from. John the Baptist lived on honeycomb found in the clefts of rock, where it was made by wild bees. The gnat is mentioned as the tiniest creature (Matthew 23. 24) in contrast with the biggest—the camel. In the East, where insect life is so prolific, it is not unusual to strain milk or water through muslin to get out gnats, etc. Edible locusts are present in Palestine

and were a common article of diet (Matthew 3. 4; Mark 1. 6).

IV

We have been considering the natural features of Palestine, whether the hills or valleys or climate or the life in it, vegetable and animal, but all in relation to the use made of them by Jesus and their effect on Him and on the people among whom He lived. There is, however, a converse and highly significant picture—that of the effect of the spirit of man on the physical conditions. The most conspicuous example of this, not only in Palestine perhaps, but in all the world, is Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has not a single spring of water within its walls. One spring just outside the wall on the escarpment of the Kedron Valley is produced by the filtering of water through the slightly porous limestone down to a lower stratum of extremely hard rock. The city was provided with water all through historical time, up to the British occupation toward the end of the Great War, mainly from a multitude of cisterns cut in the soft limestone rock that lies between the hard surface rock and the even harder fundamental rock. One of these cisterns in the Temple area, called by the Arabs the Great Sea, is said to hold twenty million gallons. Spring water was also brought to Jerusalem in Jesus' time by stone aqueducts carried from big rock-hewn cisterns—called Solomon's Pools—near Bethlehem. Physically an impossible site, it has become the spiritual center of the world for Jewry and Christendom, and one of the

great centers of Islam. This miracle may be said to have been achieved through the simple but astoundingly original conception promulgated by Moses after God had spoken to him on Mount Sinai of a portable shrine in which the invisible God might rest. On every continent, in all ages of historic time, thousands of wooden or metal or stone idols have been carried in shrines; but nowhere else had the thought entered the mind of man of a shrine as the seat of the invisible Divine Glory. This shrine, the Ark, thus became the rallying center of the wandering tribes that were by it drawn together as the Jewish nation. When this Ark was carried to the hill-fortress that David wrested from the Jebusite group, the place where it rested, and therefore the Temple that was built by Solomon around that place, became the supreme center of the nation's life. The Shekinah, that is, the glory of Jehovah, dwelt in the Holy of Holies. The festivals that we have reviewed were the times of special rallying to this specific place; and to this day millions of Jews across the world, whether in New York, London, Leipzig, or Budapest, raise at Passover the poignant cry, "Next year in Jerusalem."

Jerusalem, then, is a spiritual and psychological creation, defying geographical obstacles. In Jesus' time that lovely mass of the Temple at Jerusalem, surrounded by the battlements of the city walls erected by Herod, was one of the wonderful buildings of the world. From the boulders in the Kidron Valley to the top of the Temple towers was fully four hundred and fifty feet. The city walls ran for four miles round the hills. Three giant towers loomed above all

the rest, built by Herod the Great. The colonnade of the outer court of the Temple was over seven hundred feet long, with marble pillars one hundred feet high in the center aisle and fifty feet high in the two side aisles, bearing up lovely roofs of cedar wood. Between the Outer and the Inner Courts was the Stone of Forbidding, on which was carved in the Gentile language, Greek, the notice:

LET NO FOREIGNER ENTER WITHIN THE SCREEN
AND ENCLOSURE AROUND THE HOLY PLACE.
WHOSOEVER IS TAKEN SO DOING WILL HIMSELF
BE THE CAUSE THAT DEATH OVERTAKES HIM.

Steps led past this screen, behind which rose the central Temple buildings with nine gates, within which was the Court of the Women, so called not because it was only for women, but as the last into which women might penetrate. Beyond it lay the Court of the Priests, with the Altar of Sacrifice, and behind that, hidden by a great curtain, the Holy of Holies over the rock of sacrifice. That sacred mystery hidden in the heart of the Temple, the Shekinah, the Glory of the Lord, was the rallying focus and the radiating center of the Hebrew people. Dispersed as they were throughout the world, it held their loyalty and adoring reverence. Around that shrine the final drama of the last weeks of Jesus' life was played to its tragic climax.

Thus, as we have seen, Palestine has unusual characteristics which have produced great psychological and spiritual results. It is a country open to the influence of movements from all the world, yet having

desert places and wildernesses as well as mountain retreats where men can be completely alone. This is why Palestine has been a nursery of creative personalities. No nation at any time in history or in any continent can show any real parallel to the marvelous torrent of ideas and of emotion wedded to intensely practical policies, both national and international, that we find in the prophets. Stung by social, economic, and political injustice, menaced by powerful empires, tortured by social oppression, they were fired by indignation and pity, as well as by poignant longing for the Rule of God in the life of man. These men were able, in the silence and solitude of the wilderness, to listen to the voice of the Eternal. That Voice spoke either in thunder against wrong or in promise of good to come. They caught clear visions of a kingdom of God. They came back into the city and town to speak in the streets what they had heard and seen in the desert. These prophetic stormy voices gave to the world a vehement yet coherent program of man's life as a morally ordered and spiritually inspired reality such as no other land has ever contributed. Their teaching, expressed in immortal poetry and prose, still challenges us; it braces the will and feeds the moral vitality of mankind. From Deborah to John the Baptist we follow a line of men and women in whose spirit the domination of dictatorships and empires produced seething revolt, and who, under the night sky and in the desert, found the message that their nation needed. In the next chapter we shall study the influence of this on the mind of Jesus.



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

A Hillside Street in Nazareth

This alternation of stress and strain with calm and solitude, this movement from exposure to man's harshness and injustice to silence and isolation, is unique in its creative gift. It produced recovery of poise and healing of spirit. It opened the whole personality to God, and so was a channel for new truth to irrigate the life of mankind. All this rises straight out of the physical geography and climatic characteristics of Palestine as we have now reviewed them.

CHAPTER IV

THE PANORAMA OF HIS PEOPLE

ALL this background of empire, of culture, and of geography was a part of Jesus' conscious life from His boyhood. Nazareth was in a cup in the hills; but it was at a center around which all these influences played.

Standing on the hillcrest above the town, a Nazarene boy would feel from the northwest and west the bracing breeze that springs up in the afternoon bringing dew and freshness from the Mediterranean. Turning toward that breeze and letting it play on him, he could see the sails of ships going north to Tyre and Sidon, and south to Caesarea and Joppa, and from those places west to Athens, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, and Alexandria. The people of Tyre, which lay not many miles from Jesus' home, were able, centuries before His day, to sail farther than any folk who had ever lived, because they alone had learned to steer by the stars; whereas those who sailed by sight were forced to hug the coasts and anchor at night. So the Tyrians (or Phoenicians) traded with people as remote as the tin-miners of Cornwall in Britain.

Turning His back to the breeze and looking over the hidden deep gorge of the Jordan Valley, Jesus could see the rolling hills of Transjordan, the beginning of the Hauran over which Abraham, the patriarchal ancestor of the Hebrew people, came from the Eu-

phrates, with his nephew Lot and his swarming flocks and herds and black goat-hair tents. Southeastward still across the Jordan Valley rose the harder curves of the hills of Gilead, and south of them Moab, to which Moses led the people out of Egypt, and where he himself died. Down the steep glens from Moab Joshua led the folk into the hidden Jordan Valley to the battle of Jericho, and so up the harsh hills into the Promised Land of Canaan.

Bringing His eyes from the distance to the nearer scene, Jesus saw the neighboring hilltop of Mount Tabor. From a hillside in the glen at its feet Deborah had ruled and judged the people, and Baruch loosed his highland fighters upon Sisera's nine hundred chariots. The River Kishon, whose green ribbon Jesus could see in the Plain of Esdraelon, overflowed and bogged the chariot wheels of the emperor, and Deborah sang her triumphant song (Judges 5. 19-21).

Up through the Gap of Jezreel from Transjordan and across the Jordan the Arabs (or Midianites) had swarmed "as locusts for multitude," driving the children of Israel into fortified hill villages. Jesus could see Mount Gilboa, at whose foot Gideon gathered his warriors by a rushing stream and drove this horde of Arabs back through the gap over the Jordan to the desert. But other enemies came up from the western side of the sea plain, and on this same Mount Gilboa King Saul and his sons fell in battle with the Philistines.

More stirring even than these battle conflicts was the spiritual strife of Elijah under the bluff on Mount Carmel, which Jesus could plainly see against the set-

ting sun. There was the brook Kishon, into which the prophets of Baal were hurled, and across the plain lay the city of Jezreel to which King Ahab then galloped, obedient to the prophet's instructions, to escape being bogged in the loose soil during the oncoming storm.

So we might go through the story of the Old Testament, showing how much of it lay beneath Jesus' eyes as He stood there. All the rest of it He would see as a twelve-year-old boy when He walked from Nazareth to Jerusalem to the Passover. When He had crossed the Plain of Esdraelon He came to the Samaritan hills. In the little plain of Dothan, among the hills, Joseph was sold by his brothers to a passing camel-caravan of merchants trading between Egypt and the East. Jesus passed on between Mount Gerizim (2,800 feet above sea level) and Mount Ebal (3,095 feet), whither Joshua led the people and they shouted the blessing and the cursing across the valley. Close at hand was Jacob's Well, carrying all its associations with that great patriarch of the nation. As Jesus passed on southward over the hills of Judea He saw the hilltop where King Saul was born; the ravines up which the Philistines charged from Ajalon against Saul at Michmash and Gilgal; the other hilltop where Jacob slept with a stone for his pillow and dreamed of the ladder to heaven and so called it Bethel, the House of God. All these places the boy saw, until at last He came in sight of the one city which sums up the whole history of the Jewish race within itself—Jerusalem.

The story of man, Asiatic or Western, offers no

parallel to the marvelous divine discipline which lay within that historic panorama. Out of a nomad group of tent-dwelling tribes who, in company with other tribes of similar racial background, roved with their sheep, goats, camels, and asses over the sparse grazing grounds of the eastern Mediterranean, God created through those events in that land an immortal nation. Behind and beneath the external drama (a few scenes from which we have briefly catalogued) was the hidden potent working of the purpose of the Eternal. That discipline brought to expression the supreme truth given to this people alone (and not to India, China, Greece, or Rome) that the creative Spirit who makes the universe and man has in His thoughts a clear, definite, moral purpose and goal; that He is holy and is the God of history.

II

That historical perspective is so vital to Jesus' teaching that we need here to look swiftly across it from the ridge at Nazareth. The first progenitors of the Hebrew people were led westward from Mesopotamia by the call which Jehovah communicated to Abraham. They moved slowly around the fringe of the desert, feeding their flocks on the pasturage of Transjordan and being led over Jordan into Palestine. More than a millennium before Jesus' time drought drove them from Palestine southward over the desert into the Nile Valley. There in Egypt, as the price of sustenance, they suffered the immemorial tyranny that afflicts workers in Africa—forced labor. Their inner core of vitality, however, their

power of multiplying, their moral and spiritual resistance to domination at last brought them, under the leadership of one of the greatest geniuses in history—Moses—out of that tyranny across the desert. Moses had learned statecraft in Pharaoh's court; the call of the Eternal speaking to his patriotic heart gave him indomitable fortitude; and he had the forward view of the prophet, certain of Jehovah's daily guidance. These gifts were all brought by him to the task of creating an immortal nation.

Moses led his people out of Egypt northeastward through long years of wandering. At some point in that trek from Egypt to the mountainous region between the Jordan and the sea which they called Canaan (now Palestine), these people had a unique experience. Through Moses, their leader, a covenant was entered into between their God (Jehovah) and themselves. He expressed His will to them in words which are unsurpassed for moral authority and elevation. Obedience to those words would insure His protection and His use of the Hebrew people as the tool of His divine ends (Exodus 19. 5-6). Whatever explanation men may make of the process by which that covenant was reached, the Hebrew's certainty that the covenant was made is something quite new, a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind. The secular historian who fails to reckon with it is allowing a skeptical bias to block his view of reality. The Hebrew nation were the first people on this planet to be fired by a real sustained conviction of destiny. It is difficult for us to grasp that up to this point in the story of man no one had any sense of history; that is,

of man moving through intelligible processes toward a goal that had moral significance.

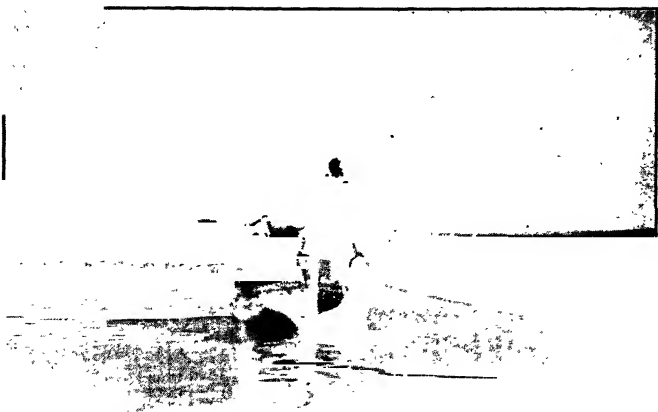
At Sinai the daring enterprise was launched of a whole nation living consciously under the rule of God. Loyalty to Him was the passport of citizenship. Such loyalty was spiritual and moral, although it had physical racial implications. Jehovah traveled with them, they believed, the aura of His glory being present in the Ark. Divided in counsel, perpetually disobedient, critical and complaining against the needed discipline, the nation nevertheless grew under that divine compulsion and leadership into increasing unity. Because of that core of certainty of divine rule and protection no empire, however potent, could break them. It was so then; it is so now; it was supremely so in Jesus' day.

Having reached the eastern ridge of the Jordan Valley under Moses' leadership, the Hebrew people at his death were led across that valley northwestward by a soldier of high rank, both military and spiritual—Joshua. Exploratory essays by spy and by foray into the Canaanite country showed Palestine to be, as they said, "a land flowing with milk and honey." It took about two hundred years for the Hebrew people to master the tribes which held the town and village fortresses of the land (Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites, etc.). These tribes worshiped nature gods and especially Baalim, associated with fertility. Baal was linked up with feudal aristocratic authority over land. These gods were worshiped in physical form: wood, stone, or metal. They were local gods, territorial or tribal. The invisible Jehovah of the Hebrews, on the

other hand, was associated, not with gross and sensual rites of gods of fertility, but with the austere bracing moral system of the Ten Commandments. Increasingly the judges and prophets of Israel claimed for Him, not merely local or tribal or national power, but an everlasting kingdom over all the earth and, indeed, over the universe that He created.

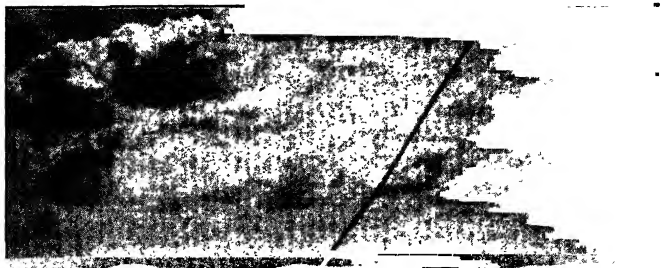
The Israelites, surrounded by these picturesque lax gods, lapsed into the lower, immoral, aristocratic cults. The prophets of Jehovah strove in stormy speech to rally the people to the pure, more democratic regime of men equal under one Jehovah. The conflicting standards of value ran into economics and land ownership. Jehovah stood, His prophets declared, not for Baal's feudal autocracy but for the rights of the poor peasant. We thus have a spiritual and moral battle working itself out in military, political, and economic practical issues. That strife, on which in one sense the history of the world hung, was conducted from the side of Jehovah by a sequence of priestly, kingly, or purely prophetic leaders.

This series of leaders emerged sporadically in face of peril and crisis, either of attack from without or division and moral sagging within. The list includes Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Eli, Samuel, and two sons of peasant farmers—Saul and David—who initiated a line of kings. The line continues with the prophets. Their contribution we shall revert to later. With the coming of the kings and the conquest of the Jebusite hill-stronghold by David a new capital city was created called the City of Peace, or Jerusalem. When David's son, Solomon, built the Temple and set in the



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

Galileans in a Fishing Boat Between Capernaum and Bethsaida



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

The View From Bethlehem

With Herod's Aqueduct in the foreground. This carried water to his palace in Jerusalem

center of it the Holy of Holies, where the Presence of God would dwell, a new type of capital city was created, its supremacy depending not so much on the presence of a royal throne as on the unseen Deity.

On either side of this Palestinian bridge of land powerful empires, as we have seen, succeeded each other. One series arose on the west—first in the Nile Valley with the Pharaohs, and then in Greece and Italy. The other series arose in the east in Mesopotamia (in the north the Assyrian and in the south the Babylonian) and, farther east on the plateau, the Persian Empire. Across the land where this Hebrew people dwelt these empires fought one another through a score of centuries. So, as the author has written elsewhere,

“Between the hammer and the anvil of imperial ambitions the rough iron of that Semitic people, heated in the flames of war, beaten under the blows of Pharaohs and Caesars, and plunged into the hissing waters of exile, was annealed into tempered steel and shaped into an eternal tool of the Spirit.”¹

In that long story of spiritual and moral growth and political and economic agonizing, three events loom as crucial.

1. King Ahab of Samaria having married Jezebel, a princess from the pagan Baal-worshiping maritime land of Tyre, joined the worship of his queen's tribal deity, Baal, to that of Jehovah. Elijah, that utterly fearless servant of Jehovah, declared uncompromising battle against the Baal-cult, basing his fight on the

¹ *The Jew and the World Ferment*, p. 45.

commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." If the truth for which he fought had ultimately lost, the living core of our modern world would have died. For the whole growth of dominant Western civilization at its root springs from the conviction of a purpose in man's life and of a goal toward which his personality can move; and that conviction and purpose are ultimately rooted in faith in a single almighty creative moral Power, who is also personal.

2. The second crucial conflict came when the totalitarian empire of Babylon under the dictatorship of Nebuchadnezzar, acting on the belief of the right of might, the glory of war and domination, ruthlessly wrecked Jerusalem. He made the Temple a heap of stones, drank wine at the high altar to the bestial gods of Babylon, and dragged the Hebrew people across the desert to the banks of the Euphrates into exile.

It was at this point that the Hebrew people began to collect together the records of their national history, as is natural with a people wrested away from their homeland and capital city. Not only, however, did they recover their past, but through their suffering they saw a new and much loftier vision of their place in the world. They had already seen God as one and holy and almighty as well as all-knowing. They now increasingly thought of Him as guiding His people by love and goodness, through suffering, toward a kingdom of God that no despotism rooted in force can even comprehend. Passages such as Isaiah 32. 1-4, 16-18; and chapters 60-62 present in inspired prophetic poetry this daring conception of God's kingdom achieved through His suffering servant. Isaiah

in Jerusalem, Amos among his sycamore trees on the hills, Hosea deserted by his wife, Jeremiah trying to hold his king and people steady under the menace of Babylon, all stood for the supremacy of the spiritual and the moral in a world hag-ridden by gross material despotisms. Isaiah's daring picture of the Oriental emperor as merely "the handle of an axe" in God's hand to be thrown away when used is but one illustration of this unique prophetic witness to the totalitarian authority of God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." Out of this grew the Messianic hope of the coming of the Prince of Peace, the arrival of a golden age, the kingdom of God.

3. The third crucial vision of truth came from the herdsman-agriculturist, Amos, who turned into a bracing challenge the perilous doctrine of the Jews being God's favorite people. In place of the danger of slackness through hope for God's indulgent favoritism, Amos said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3. 2).

III

Jesus' own family and their more distant relatives were devout people, who, under the Roman despotism, and surrounded by pagan ideas, longed poignantly for the coming of the Servant-Messiah. Those pictures came to Jesus in the scroll of Isaiah in such famous passages as those beginning: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," and "Behold my servant whom I have chosen," and again,

"He was despised and rejected of men," culminating in the words that came to carry for Jesus more meaning than they had ever borne to any other boy, or even to the man who wrote them—the program of revolution beginning with "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me"—the passage that Jesus was to read in Nazareth and to claim as realized in Himself. The prophets outlined not only a program of work but a goal of life that no person before Jesus had been equipped to achieve.

All these elements in the glorious inheritance of the Hebrew people came with burning reality into the consciousness of the adolescent Jesus. All the heritage that we have just described was present also in the mind of any intelligent Jewish youth who was a contemporary of Jesus.

Some Palestinian youth escaped from these problems into the pagan pleasantness of Hellenic civilization—the theaters, the hippodromes, and Greek and Roman art and culture. To multitudes of Jews, however, especially young rebellious, vehement Galileans, the Prince-Messiah meant definite political rebellion against Rome. Within six or seven miles of Nazareth when Jesus was a small boy, Varus, the Roman general, smashed a revolt of ten thousand Galilean youth led by Judas the Galilean, burned the city of Sophoris to the ground, and crucified some thousands of rebels, sending the rest on board ship to slavery in different parts of the Roman Empire. Even two of Jesus' young disciples, through their ambitious mother, within a fortnight or so of the crucifixion had this political rule so dominantly in mind that

they asked Him for seats as premier and treasurer in His coming kingdom.

The divine creative genius of Jesus took that spiritual and moral heritage and transformed it from the national localized monopoly of a single people into the heritage of mankind. The austere rigid regulations of the Mosaic law He transcended, yet included by going back to the inner motives in the heart of the individual and of the nation. The hard, narrow picture of God favoring one people He again transcended by showing that God is the Father of all mankind. Similarly, the conception of a Prince-Messiah achieving a national triumph for the Jews was transmuted into that of the world Saviour. The idea of a kingdom of God ruled from a throne in Jerusalem by an earthly prince descended from David was shown to be realized in Jesus as the Saviour of all mankind regardless of race or nation. By Him the central national festival of the Passover was made the seed of that simple, profound, intimate communion and fellowship that today gathers men and women from every race under heaven to feed upon Him in their hearts with thanksgiving.

CHAPTER V

THE GREEK WAY OF LIFE

FOR quite two hundred years before the birth of Jesus,¹ the life of the people in Palestine was bound up with the Greek way of life and the framework of Roman authority. From the day when the Greek Seleucid King Antiochus the Great smashed the Egyptian forces on the banks of the infant Jordan north of the Lake of Galilee (201 B. C.), Greek fashions and thoughts seeped into Palestine. The aristocrats of the Temple at Jerusalem specially welcomed them. Jason, the brother of the high priest, headed the Greek enthusiasts (called "Hellenizers") suggesting "a new covenant with the heathen that are about us" (1 Maccabees 1. 15). He proposed, and the King granted, a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem with Jewish older boys and young men organized into groups for athletic sports and intellectual training. Priests even left the services in the Temple to go to watch their sons wrestling in the Jerusalem gymnasium.

This paganism scandalized the orthodox Jews, as was to be expected. A struggle broke out between the two parties—the Hellenizers and the Orthodox. Each side strove to capture the high-priesthood. King Antiochus was so intensely eager that all his empire should use Greek ways and language and wor-

¹ From the battle of Zama when Rome crushed Carthage in the western Mediterranean and began to control the Greek world in the eastern Mediterranean.

ship Greek gods that he massacred the rebel Jews in Jerusalem who resisted his will. He horrified the Jews of all the Roman world by setting up the statue of Olympian Zeus (or Jupiter) in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jehovah. He forced Jews at Jerusalem to carry ivy in the drunken processions of the feast of Bacchus. He burned the sacred Books of the Law; and sent his soldiers through the whole of Palestine to set up altars to Heracles, Aphrodite, and other Greek gods and goddesses.

Thousands of heroic Jews died rather than give way to this dictatorship that dared to decree not only a man's behavior but the god whom he should worship, and the beliefs that he should hold. This happened a hundred and sixty years before Jesus was born; but the stubborn refusal of the Jews to obey Antiochus is the forerunner of the great strife that led straight on to the struggle which raged round Jesus and led Him to the Cross; and it is a close parallel to the struggle of Christians today from Central Europe to the Far East. For those martyr Jews began building up the only immovable rock of resistance left in the western world against the commands whether of Greek king or Roman emperor to give up the worship of Jehovah and obedience to the Law of Moses. We see in their resistance to Antiochus in 160 B. C. the beginning of the refusal to let the Nation-State tyrannize over the soul of man in his dealings with the Eternal. Over two thousand years later in the twentieth century, in Asia and Europe, that same faith in the supremacy of the Eternal is nerving heroes and martyrs to face prison, torture, and death.

We cannot here record the drama of Mattathias and his sons, Judas Maccabeus—Judas “the hammer”—Jonathan, and Simon, who fought the battles and wove the schemes that at last compelled their Greek king and, after him, even the Roman senate to give freedom to these stubborn Jews so that they might worship their invisible God in His restored and purified Temple in Jerusalem.

After this struggle of the Maccabees, Israel again stood up a nation. She was free to be loyal to that God-given Law of Moses and to that Covenant which had many centuries earlier first welded the nomad tribes into a single people.

In Jesus' day the Roman Empire, with its Greek civilization, covered western Europe from the Danube to the Seine and the Thames, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. It governed all North Africa down the sea coast to the Sahara Desert and from the Atlantic on the west to the Red Sea. It ran across Palestine and Transjordan to the Euphrates and the frontiers of Iran.

The Roman rule was more powerful than all previous empires in the world's history, because, by stupendous physical feats of engineering, and by a unique system of law, administration, and military and naval force, it bound all this vast area into a coherent organization based on definite standards of value. At the heart of these standards of value lay a belief in justice for imperial citizens, and in order; and the Roman at his best had the will and the energy to pursue those great ends. But in that pursuit he often became remorselessly cruel and atrociously avaricious.

The whole system rested on a foundation of slave-labor.

Roads constructed by uncounted thousands of slaves, scientifically dug out and built like a bridge with layers of stone upon stone, stretched straight across the continent, and even in the remoter North Sea Islands of Britain where their alignment can be traced to this day. Along these roads legions tramped and *castra* (garrisons) were organized, giving their names to scores of cities, even in those remote British islands. Aqueducts bestrode valleys carrying water to the cities. A fleet cleansed the seas of pirates to a degree never before realized in history, making the Great Sea itself a new highway.

In all the cities to which those new roads led and into which the goods of the world poured, new and wonderful buildings were being put up. They had Greek elements in them, but were built by the clumsier Roman hand. They were found in profusion in Palestine in Jesus' day; because He was born toward the end of the reign of one of the most enthusiastic and industrious builders that the world has ever seen—Herod the Great. He built amphitheaters, hippodromes, castles, aqueducts, palaces, the superb mole that created the harbor of Caesarea Palestina, and towering above all both in bulk and in artistry, the mighty Temple at Jerusalem, the roof and columns of whose outer court alone (translated "porch" in the New Testament) were almost as high and long as the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine.

Not content with this, Herod built for himself in Jerusalem a palace on the southwest hill in which

there were two dining halls each having couches for a hundred guests. Shady colonnades all round open courts contained groves and shrubberies watered by an aqueduct that he built from the hills beyond Bethlehem. This palace afterward became the residence of the Roman procurators (of whom Pilate was one) when in Jerusalem for the feasts. Herod rebuilt the citadel in the city, and outside it to the south a theater. Chariot races, gladiators, wild beasts, actors, musicians—he imported them all into Jerusalem, so great was the enthusiasm of this semi-Oriental, semi-Western despot for the outer shows of Graeco-Roman civilization.

The romantic story of Jericho in the century leading up to Jesus' life illustrates simultaneously the building passion of Herod and the interaction of the varied life of the whole Mediterranean Graeco-Roman world on Palestine.

Jericho, the City of the Moon Goddess, lying on the tropical heats of the Jordan Valley, was rich because the ladies of all the cities of the Roman Empire desired the perfume from its great orchards of balm bushes. This valuable gift was presented by Antony to his beloved Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. She (her romance ended) sold the city and the land around it to Herod the Great some years before the birth of Jesus. Herod mobilized thousands of slaves and set them quarrying in the steep limestone hills. For years they toiled in the strength-draining heats of that valley to achieve the grandiose plans of Herod. They built stone aqueducts that led streams of water from the hills to the spreading gardens to which he brought

strange and beautiful plants. They built him a sumptuous palace in which he lived during the winter, when Jerusalem on the bleak Judean hills, and even his other cities of Samaria and Caesarea on the coast, were cold. They raised an amphitheater where gladiators fought, and a hippodrome where the chariot-eers raced amid the cheers of an excited populace. As Herod lay dying in that palace and heard that people would rejoice when he died (hoping that his oppressive taxation would end), he ordered that amphitheater to be filled with men to be killed at his death, so that at least—as he grimly said—some should be sorry that he had died.

If you wander today along the main street of Gerasa, among the hills above the north bank of the Zerka River east of Jordan, an appreciation of that Greek civilization sweeps over you. Here is a city founded, it is believed, by the veterans of Alexander the Great (possibly on the foundations of Ramoth in Gilead), which was brought into the Roman Province of Syria by Pompey after his campaign of 64 B. C. Later it joined the League of Decapolis, the ten Greek cities stretching from Damascus in the north and coming down the eastern side of the Jordan Valley to Philadelphia in the south. The buildings that we see date in their present form mainly from the first and second centuries, but they were reconstructions of earlier similar structures. There is a triumphal arch, a stadium, an arena, a theater, and at least three temples. As you walk along the main street and note the grooves worn by the chariot wheels of that busy city and recall that it was only one of that group of

ten which fringed the whole eastern edge of Palestine, and as you recall the vigorous intellectual as well as commercial and military life that pulsed through them, a new sense of the cosmopolitan background of Jesus' world comes over the mind. From one of the smaller Greek cities of Decapolis, just across the Sea of Galilee eastward, came Meleager the epigrammatist, Menippus the satirist, and Theodorus the rhetorician, tutor to the boy Nero, who was emperor when Paul reached Rome.

One evidence of the spread of these Greek ways in a setting that Jesus visited can still be seen. At the foot of the cliff from which a stream breaks out in brilliant sparkling clear water at Caesarea Philippi, an inscription and niches are still plainly visible celebrating the presence of the Greek god Pan and his nymphs. The place itself is today called Baneas, which, seeing that the Arabs cannot pronounce the P, is their corruption of the Greek word "Paneas." The name of Paneas was displaced in Jesus' time by Philip the tetrarch when he rebuilt the town and called it Caesarea, after the emperor, and Philippi, after himself.

What was the ideal that this Greek way of life tried to realize? The best single word for that goal is harmony. The ideal man was one who blended in his life the good, the true, the beautiful. The Greeks did not, indeed, think of these three as separate or even separable; but all of a piece. Reality was made up of goodness, truth, and beauty. The gods that they worshiped were a picture-myth of the harmony of body and spirit; the perfect Republic of Plato was the



The Steep Limestone Hills of Jericho
With the Ruins of Jericho in the foreground

real Republic of, say, Sparta carried to its completion. The extremes should be shunned because they destroy the harmony of the parts; in habits and ways of living men should follow the happy, "the golden," mean.

All this was breaking down in Jesus' day; indeed, it had already broken down. To follow truth with the brain led to the conviction that the gods had no real existence; the Hellenic mind wandered lost in search of "the unknown God." The balance of freedom and order between man and the state that governed him had been beautifully realized for the aristocracy; but it was built on an enormous slave-proletariat that heaved in sullen restlessness and shook the fabric of society. Even that unique power of the Greeks to create perfect expression of beauty in stone and in language, a power which had sprung from the inner harmony, was now lost with the shattering of the harmony. So instead of joy in the present, the bewildered youth of the world in which Jesus lived had transferred their goal of desire to the future. Dissatisfied with the world in which he lived, the Greek either sagged into a cynical attempt to enjoy himself while he could, or determined to try to make a better world in the future. By the side of these cynical or disillusioned educated people surged the ignorant masses sunk in superstition. Superstition was not confined to the uneducated: even a general would seek guidance, by regarding the entrails of a slain animal, as to whether or not he should go to battle. No one, not even the wisest philosophers, knew with any confidence where the direction of the universe lay—whether by blind chance or inflexible imper-

sonal law, or the conflicting whims of inconsequent gods and goddesses.

The fact that one of the three languages in the inscription on the Cross was Greek, that the names of two of the apostles, Philip and Andrew, were Greek, and that the whole of the New Testament is written in the colloquial Greek of the rank and file of the Hellenic world, suggests the pervading presence and influence of Greek civilization in the world in which Jesus lived. Its influence among the dispersed Jews in the Roman Empire was far greater than in Palestine. As the missionaries of the Gospel found their way along the Roman roads and over the Great Sea freed from pirates by Roman rule, so psychologically the Good News took on the raiment of the Greek language, which became the medium through which it reached the world beyond Palestine.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROMAN EAGLES

ALL the subject peoples of the Roman Empire were brought into a great administrative and legal system. Human relationships, whether of master and slave, emperor and subject, buyer and seller, father and son, husband and wife, soldier and civilian, were closely organized under the system of Roman law administered everywhere from London to Jerusalem. Citizenship could be achieved by men of any race, and was the proud possession of those who acquired it or who were born free. The system was as ruthless to those who resisted it as it was protective to those who accepted it. "Spare the submissive and crush the rebel" was the fundamental precept. The Roman Empire was divided into provinces, of which Judea was one, and of this province Pilate was appointed procurator by the emperor Tiberias in 26 A. D. His rule extended over Samaria, Judea, and down to the Dead Sea.

The cost of this machinery was high. Morally, one of the weakest points of the empire administration was that the right of collecting taxes was farmed out, the right being sold by auction. This put a premium on corruption in taxation and on economic oppression. It is certain that in Jesus' time in Palestine the average Jew paid some thirty per cent of his income in taxes. The men who collected the taxes were called *publicani*. The reason for the loathing of the publican was

not necessarily that he lived an evil life, but that he was, in the eyes of the patriotic Jew, the lowest kind of traitor. A man like Zacchaeus of Jericho, although a Jew, sold himself to the Roman emperor to squeeze the last *denarius* of taxation out of his brother Jew. He handed over what he must to the emperor's representative, and put the remainder into his own purse. The hatred of "publicans" was fiercer in Palestine than in any other part of the empire because of the intensity of the flames of a Jewish nationalism that was not only a political patriotism but a religion.

The Jew's problem under the Roman Empire was "How am I to combine obedience to God who commands the conduct of my life with obedience to an alien rule that often orders me to do things contrary to His will?" This problem did not arise inside the other religious cults, rival worships, and mystical faiths within the Roman Empire, because—unlike Hebrew religion—they did not believe in any all-embracing, all-controlling, moral law ordained by the Creator of the universe. To the orthodox Jew salvation depended on obeying the divine law. Rome ordered him to break that law. There lay the dreadful dilemma for the Jew. But Rome faced a similar dilemma from the other side.

The Roman ruler's problem as he faced the Jewish people had in it solid reasons for demanding their obedience. Rome at its best was founded on the hitherto undreamed-of goal of a single universal scheme of administration for the good of all, insuring justice and ordered security. In a powerful although rather high-flown passage, Seneca (*De Clem-*

ency, i) puts into the mouth of his pupil, the Prince Nero, the conviction that the good of the governed reposes on the absolute authority of the emperor. "It is good to look within and go the round of a clear conscience, and afterward to cast one's eyes on this great mass of humanity with its conflicts, its plots, its weakness, its certain fate of bringing ruin to itself and others if it should ever break our yoke and rise in revolt." The passage closes with a tremendous assertion of moral responsibility made by the heir to the imperial throne. "This very day should the immortal gods demand from me a reckoning, I am ready to account to them for the whole race of men."

The rule of Rome did not rise to the full level of moral responsibility shouldered in Seneca's sentences; but it was a better rule than anything the world had seen. To the Roman government, set on welding many races into one coherent self-contained community under a single rule, the refusal of obedience by the widely spread yet cohesive Jewish race was maddening. Both Cicero (*Pro Flacco*, 28) and Tacitus (*Histories*, v, 5) attack the Jews and their proselytes for sending money to the Temple exchequer, a rival to the imperial exchequer.

When the young, ambitious procurator, Pontius Pilate, sailed with his wife into the harbor of Caesarea Philippi, round the massive mole that Herod the Great had built, he represented, as we have seen, the most thoroughly organized totalitarian empire that the world had so far seen. The eagles, representing the Roman emperor's authority, hung in every city of that empire from London and Marseilles to Eph-

sus and Alexandria; but they did not hang in Jerusalem. To burn incense before the image of the emperor was the required ritual of loyal citizenship from Paris to the Danube and North Africa—but not in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the only city in the empire that was exempt. Again and again Roman representatives had tried to hang the emperor's imperial standards on the walls of Jerusalem, but had always failed.

Pilate stubbornly decided to insist on the imperial eagles being hung on the Tower of Antony, the garrison headquarters overlooking the Temple area. He had three thousand soldiers in garrison at Caesarea on the coast, which was the imperial headquarters, and smaller groupings at Jerusalem and elsewhere. Under cover of night, with his three thousand soldiers in camp outside Jerusalem, Pilate's officers carried the imperial standards into the city and set them up on the high walls of the Tower of Antony. If the Jews rebelled, he would be justified in suppressing them; if they did not rebel, he would have won: so he argued. The Jews did neither. Some five thousand of them, stimulated by Annas, the ex-high priest, and Caiaphas, the high priest, his son-in-law, marched some sixty miles from Jerusalem to Caesarea. For six days they camped in front of Pilate's Palace in prayer that the images of Caesar be removed. Losing patience and nerve Pilate ordered them into the Hippodrome. On their repeated demand for the removal of the eagles, he issued an order that brought soldiers with drawn swords into the arena ready to massacre the Jews. They all threw themselves on the ground with bared necks, preferring death to this

ultimate breach of the law of God. Pilate was beaten. To massacre that group meant inflaming the Jewish population of the whole empire from Gaul and Spain to the banks of the Nile. Pilate's career would have been ended. He therefore sullenly ordered the standards to be brought back from Jerusalem.¹

This episode took place when Jesus was barely thirty years old. Three years later Annas and Caiaphas, egging on a group of Jews, again broke Pilate's will so that Jesus was crucified.

Rome, with a certain flexibility, had allowed the Sanhedrin in the Temple to keep some authority as judges and administrators. The Sanhedrin could hold preliminary trials but could not pass the death sentence, although they could recommend one to the Roman governor.²

The final condemnation of the Temple rulers (the Sadducees, princes, and millionaires of the Jewish nation) was that they used that Temple (and the spiritual and moral treasure it symbolized) as an exclusive monopoly for getting power and wealth for themselves. That is the heart of truth in Jesus' overwhelming judgment that the house which Isaiah (6. 7) saw as a place of prayer for all nations had been made into a cave for a gang of banditti. Jesus saw the Temple and the truth in Hebrew religion (that God is one, is good, is just, and is Creator of all men)

¹ The story is told in full in Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 18, iii. See also Chap. XIV of the author's *A Life of Jesus*.

² With regard to the very complicated problem of the relationship of the Temple and the Roman authorities in connection with the trial of Jesus and His condemnation, full treatment is given in Chaps. LXII-LXIV of the author's *A Life of Jesus*.

as a means for winning the world to the service of God who is Father of all. To open this truth to the world would destroy the Sadducean monopoly of the Temple prestige and finance which rested on the belief that it was accessible only to the Jewish nation. Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest used the Temple (a) for setting up a little wealthy principality whose leaders sought to escape direct Roman rule (while enjoying the security of its protection), and (b) for making a few families fantastically rich. Jesus throws into tragic relief the Sadducees' terrible use of the Holy of Holies as their personal preserve and their remorseless work to get Jesus and His teaching out of the way in the parable of the landlord and the stewards and the vineyard. "This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12. 27ff.).

The Herodians, whose position is obscure, stood for a different policy. Most of Jesus' life (including His active ministry) was spent in territory ruled by one or another of the Herod family, whose Jewish blood was blended with the Idumean. At the trial of Jesus, Pilate seized on the fact that a Herod ruled in Galilee in order to try to escape being driven to make a decision. The Herodian policy (in broad terms) was to compromise with Rome, adopt Roman ways of government, and permit and even build Roman temples, in order to keep power in their own hands through their connivance with Rome. Orthodox Jews regarded this as surrendering to heathenism. Herod Agrippa's behavior (Acts 12) is in line with this wish to be in with both sides.

The Pharisees were especially fierce against this

Herodian effort to make the best of both worlds. Zealous for rigid separation and for the holiness of utter obedience to God's law and of trust in His covenant, they believed that the Messiah would miraculously come and Israel's enemies be scattered, directly the people were entirely obedient to God. The Pharisaic policy was for separation from the Romans. They did not favor active rebellion against Rome, but spiritual holiness that would lead Jehovah to intervene on their side, and Himself overthrow Roman rule.

The Zealots, on the contrary, were Jewish nationalists who believed in preparing for physical rebellion.

So political Rome, with its armed might, faced a defiant political and religious Judaism. In a head-on collision Rome would be bound to win in the long run. Would that crash of Jewish national and racial unity, centered in Jerusalem and the Temple, mean the destruction of the superb treasure of Hebrew religion? Or could that moral and spiritual treasure shake off the nationalistic exclusiveness and become available for the whole world?

That was the problem that faced Jesus as He lived in the midst of the Roman world.

When the question was put to Him in the Temple area at Passover time, surrounded by an anti-Roman nationalistic multitude of pilgrims, "Shall we pay taxes to Rome?" they seemed to be putting into His hand a bomb which must explode to His damage whichever way He replied. If He said "Yes," He would be labeled imperialist and would alienate the pilgrims. If He said "No," he would at once lay Himself open to banishment by Rome as a rebel and

the leader of a nonco-operative passive resistance campaign. Jesus asked them to show Him a silver *denarius* from the Roman imperial mint, with the head of the emperor on one side of it. On the other side were printed the titles of the emperor. "Whose face is engraved on this?" Jesus asked, holding it up; and then, turning it over, "And whose inscription does it carry?" At the reply "Caesar's," He answered, "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar," and then, with a totally unexpected flash, "and give God what belongs to God." *ὁ οὖν ἄνθρωπος*

This saying governed the life of the early Church, and not only saved it from destruction but enabled it to acquire the supremacy that was a factor in this achievement. Jesus did not say that the rule of the totalitarian emperor was good or that it was to persist forever. He did say that, while the emperor ruled, men should render him dues. For, what with the administration of justice, the freedom of the roads and of the seas, the enforcement of order, the enormous increase of commerce, and the opening of the wide world under the *Pax Romana*, there was definitely something worth paying for in Roman rule. In fact, to read the list of the places from which the pilgrims came to Jerusalem (Acts 2) is to realize that without the protection and the roads of Rome they never could have arrived.

A similar standard of values rules Jesus' relationships with Roman officials like the centurions and tax collectors. He shows repeatedly that their office meant nothing to Him and their personality everything. His call to Matthew the publican, His trans-

formation of the life of the other publican, Zachaeus, His constant readiness to take meals with tax collectors, His sharp assertion to the Pharisees that the loathed *publicani* would come into the Kingdom before them, all reveal His power of driving through surface distinctions to the hearts of men.

The same direct penetration is revealed in Jesus' relation with the Roman centurion. A centurion, we recall, was an officer in the Roman army commanding a hundred men. As a legion at its full strength contained some six thousand foot-soldiers, it would include sixty centurions. Jesus assessed the centurion at Capernaum above the level of the Jews themselves on the ground that, as He said, He "had not found such great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8. 10)—that is, not in any of the Jews. A good many Roman officers and men, as well as merchants, found in Judaism's enlightened belief in one holy God a more reasonable faith than the worn-out Roman worship of varied gods of more or less corrupt moral standards. This accounts, for example, for the fact that the building of the beautiful synagogue at Capernaum was financed by a Roman military officer. The centurion living at Capernaum brought his conception of the authority of the military command to his faith: "Only speak the word" (Matthew 8. 5-13). It is significant also that the one tribute paid to Christ on the Cross, a tribute reported in each of the Synoptic Gospels, was paid by the centurion who superintended the Crucifixion (Matthew 27. 54; Mark 15. 39; Luke 23. 47).

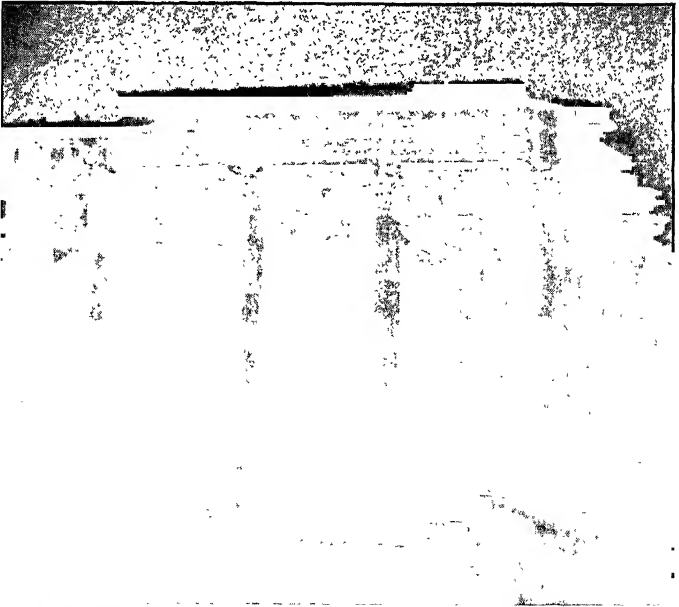
The story of what Jesus did and said in Galilee was

written down in the books bearing the names of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, from recollections gathered from memory. Jesus' teaching and His personality come out clearly in those records. The more deeply we look into what He taught men and then compare it first with everything that we can find in the teaching of the Jewish Law, and in their prophets, and secondly with the Greek moralists who taught and wrote before Him around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the more we discover that what He gave to the world was "a new creation." It was original; down to its roots. New Greek words that you will not find in even such a Semite as Zeno (born on the Palestinian coast), the creator of Stoicism, the great philosophy in Jesus' day, had to be used to express the essence of Jesus' teaching—love, joy, hope, peace. Sentences and ideas like those found in His teaching can be discovered in other teachers from Confucius in China to Zoroaster in Persia. This is natural because God has progressively given truth to man since the beginning of his life on this planet. But the whole spirit and essence of Jesus' teaching is, like Himself, unique, a gift to us from Creative Love. It reveals to us what is the very nature of the universe. It shows the drama of our life in the light of the Eternal. It is real revelation about the meaning of life made not simply to Jesus' own people in His own day and in His own land, but to all men everywhere and always. What we call "Christianity" today, however, includes many standards that are not His, and some that are entirely contradictory to His teaching. We sorely need to get down to what He really said and did and



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

The Terraced Hillside on Which Bethlehem Stands



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

The Restored Synagogue at Capernaum

to understand what He was and is, and then to apply what we find in Him to ourselves and to the world of our day—our home life, business, national attitudes and relations with other nations and races.

His teaching and His acts strongly challenged the standards of the world in which He lived; its fierce nationalism, its moral standards, its religious self-centeredness, its race-purity myth. So deadly to these old standards was the strength of Jesus' pure and universal religion of the spirit when used as a guide to everyday action, that the leaders of His nation, directly they understood Him, plotted to kill Him. From their point of view it was the only thing they could do. If what He stood for began to rule the lives of men, then the enormous wealth of the high priests in Jerusalem and their immense power would fade away, for the riches and the rule were built on the belief that, through sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem and paying the dues to the high priest, lay the central route of approach to God and to His blessing. They made God national; Jesus showed Him to be universal. They looked for a Messiah to save the Jewish nation; Jesus showed them a Saviour of all men of all races.

The selfish worldly policy of the Sadducees was, as we have seen, to keep their own little dynasty in the saddle in Jerusalem in a little priestly world fenced off from Rome. The Temple was the Sadducees' citadel. The Pharisees' separatist holiness made God their national protector, the coming Messiah their national deliverer. At the other extreme stood the Herodians' pagan compromise. Jesus, face to face

with all these, recognized the moral rights of the government to obedience within its sphere, but concentrated on an uncompromising thrust of the leaven of the kingdom of God into governor and governed alike, to transform the spirit of that government and of the people. The Temple was not for the Sadducee or even the nation alone, but for the worship of God by all nations. God had no favorites; His Messiah came for all mankind.

Face to face, on the other hand, with the Roman rulers' distrust of uncompromising spiritual teaching, He recognized the just claims of the ruling power ("render unto Caesar") but pressed the supremacy of the moral and spiritual in the exercise of that power.

The marvelous thing is that although Jesus failed at the time to conquer the Jewish or the Roman mind with this policy; and although, as a consequence, forty years after His death the Jewish national independence went down in dreadful ruin, the spiritual and moral treasure of Hebrew religion was not destroyed. For the community of Christians drawn from different peoples and recognizing the Imperial rule, yet loyal to the heart of the faith, freed it, as we shall see in our study of Paul, from the locked chest of Jewish nationalism and sent it as a free currency through the world.

If we hold fast to the fact that the heart of the Christian Faith is in Jesus Christ as universal Saviour, we may freely let the blaze of light from the Graeco-Roman world illuminate the landscape of our thought about that gospel and its adventurous spread. The group of Christians in Jerusalem were Jews who saw

themselves as a purified Jewish community and were convinced that in order to become Christians the Gentiles must go through the ceremonial operation that made men Jews. It was in the Graeco-Roman city of Antioch that the first missionary enterprise of the Christian gospel sprang to life. That enterprise was headed by a man who from being Saul the Jewish persecutor became Paul the Roman citizen and Christian, who heard God's call as he came in sight of the Greek city of Damascus and, as he meditated there in the most northerly of the ten stars in that Hellenic city constellation, the League of Decapolis.

The Cross, and not any series of abstract truths, was in actual fact the power that conquered Rome in the long run. For it faced the political power, not with rebellion on the one hand nor with submission (in the sense of compromising spiritual or moral reality) on the other; but with steady goodness of living and with uncompromising readiness to die rather than set any relative power or person, however good, on the absolute throne to which God alone has the right.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL: HEBREW ORATOR, GREEK WRITER, ROMAN CITIZEN

I

A MAN in early middle age walked across the great court of the Temple at Jerusalem, up the steps to another court surrounded by a marble parapet.

Cruel enemies were watching him. For weeks they had been plotting his death. They were enthusiastic Nationalist Jews, who believed that this man Paul was a blasphemous traitor because he taught in the great cities and along the highways of the Mediterranean world, that in Jesus Christ God had shown Himself and opened a way for men. So to these passionate Nationalist Jews, who believed that in the worship of the Temple at Jerusalem was the way to find God, Paul was the enemy both of his own race and of all of the true faith. He was a traitor and a blasphemer. So they rushed at him.

"To the rescue, Men of Israel! Help! Help!" they shouted. "Here is the man who teaches everywhere against the Chosen People, against the Law of Moses, against this Holy Place. Help! Help!"

Jews who had come from far-away cities like Ephesus where Paul had been teaching, shouted that he had brought Greeks into the Temple and defiled it. With crowds shouting, "Kill him, stone him!" and beating him with sticks, Paul would soon have

been dead. On the tall tower of the Roman garrison close to the Temple, however, stood a sentinel. He dashed down to the commander of the regiment, who shouted an order, and in a few minutes Roman soldiers were on the spot. Paul's life was saved.

Lysias, the Roman commander, ordered Paul to be chained and led to the citadel. The Jewish mob crowded up behind crying, "Away with the fellow from earth!"

"May I have a word with you?" Paul asked, speaking in Greek.

"You know Greek?" cried the commander.

"I am a Jew," said Paul, "a native of Tarsus. Let me speak to the people."

He mounted the steps at the foot of the Tower of Antony, and spoke in Hebrew to the Jews, making his defense, which was a fine speech in which Paul told how he, a Jew, had assisted at the stoning of Stephen for being a Christian. But he himself had been entirely changed, and had heard God say to him, "Go, I will send you afar to the nations—the Gentiles." This maddened the Jews again. Lysias, bewildered, told the soldiers to take Paul to the barracks and examine him under the lash. They took him, stripped him, and strapped him to the thrashing post.

"Are you allowed to scourge a Roman citizen without trial?" asked Paul.

The officer, knowing that even Lysias, the commander, would be severely punished by the emperor if he did this, told Lysias what Paul had said. The commander hurried to Paul, who said that he was born

a Roman citizen. Lysias at once loosed Paul's bonds, but, of course, kept him prisoner to protect his life from the Jews, who had sworn to slay him.

This story, in which Paul speaks in Hebrew and in Greek, yet claims citizenship of the Empire of Rome, shows the strange, and indeed wonderful, way in which he blended in himself all those three great elements in the world in which Jesus and he lived—the Jewish, the Hellenic, and the Roman. By racial birth and education he was a Jew, but he spoke also the language that was understood throughout all the eastern Mediterranean world since the conquests of Alexander the Great—Greek. His speeches in which he published the message that it was his lifework to spread, were in Greek. The letters that he wrote to the groups of followers of Jesus in the great cities of the Roman Empire, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Colossae, even Rome, were in Greek. The language in which he spoke and wrote was not the high literary Greek of the poets and philosophers: it was the colloquial Greek of the merchant, shopkeeper, fisherman, and carpenter. Paul was, however, also a Roman citizen. Lysias was proud of being a Roman citizen and explained to Paul that he had himself paid a large price to buy this valued citizenship. Paul had reason to be prouder still, because he was born a citizen of the Roman Empire which made him the equal of all men, and able to claim the rights of citizenship anywhere in that empire which stretched from the River Nile and the River Jordan right across the Mediterranean and across Europe to the Rhine, the Seine, and the Thames.

As Paul used Greek as the medium for his great good news, so he used the Roman roads and the ordered peace imposed by the Roman legions all along those roads and over the seas, to enable him to pass over thousands of miles to do his work.

Before the coming of Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean there were no real roads, only foot-paths and dirt tracks made by the passing of animal caravans and the donkeys and horses. Rome set tens of thousands of slaves to make the most solid roads that the world has ever seen. They dug deep foundations, laid layer after layer of blocks of stone and pebble, and chiseled rock, curved on the surface to let the waters run off at the edges—roads along the route of which the writer has passed in Britain (then at the far northwest of that Roman Empire), in France, in Switzerland, in Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, and Palestine.

As Paul walked along those great roads from city to city, he would hear, perhaps, as he rested at some wayside caravanserai, a swift clatter of hoofs and a greeting to the ostlers, who ran out and lifted bags from the backs of sweating horses as the riders took a few minutes' rest and some food and drink. Fresh horses were led out, leather bags strapped across their backs; the men—some of them armed—leaped on the horses and thundered away down the Roman road. These were part of the wonderful post system that carried the orders of the emperor or the letters of merchants or governors all across that Roman world. Paul himself used those same roads to carry a greater message, not from an emperor, but from the Almighty. He might, indeed, be called "God's post-

man." The Greek word that he used to describe himself meant something like that. It was made up of two words, *apo stello*, meaning "I send off." He was the one who was sent with the story or a message. The word is just the same as was afterward translated into the Latin, where the word *mitto* has the same general sense as *stello*. Its past participle, *missus*—one who is sent—gives us the word "missionary."

We will now turn back and try to unravel and trace separately, one after the other, these three strange, gleaming threads of the Jew, the Greek, and the Roman, that are interwoven into the tapestry of Paul's life.

II

When Paul first looked out as a boy on the world in his home city of Tarsus, it was into the face of a Jewish mother and father. The father gave the boy the name of the great soldier-king who was the most famous of the sons of the smallest tribe of Israel—the tribe of Benjamin. So Saul was the name that the priest gave to the boy when he was carried as a baby to the synagogue.

A learned Jewish rabbi had said, "The father who does not teach his son a trade makes him a thief." Another rabbi added, "The father who teaches his son a trade makes him like a vineyard fenced around"—that is, a fruitful orchard. Saul's father taught the son his own trade of weaving the coverings of the tents used by the wandering shepherd peoples. The long, soft, strong hair of the goat was used. First it was spun into thread, and then woven on the looms

into a tough, rainproof fabric that would also keep off the glare of the sun. The pieces were sewn together in a big canvas to make a roof that was held up on poles, and the edges were tethered to the ground with pegs by ropes.

As a boy Saul also learned from memory, squatting on the ground in front of a rabbi, the story of the Hebrews told in the sacred books of the Jewish people, the laws given by God to Moses and the stirring words of the prophets. He learned about his namesake, Saul, about the father of his tribe, Benjamin, and the exciting story of how that boy, the youngest son of Jacob, went down to Egypt and there found his older brother, Joseph, the greatest man in all Egypt next to Pharaoh. Saul learned the truth that had come through the Jewish people that God is one and eternal and good, and he learned how the Hebrew race were waiting for the coming of the Prince or Messiah, who would free and save their nation.

One year his father, probably when the boy was thirteen and had therefore become, according to the Jewish custom, a Son of the Law, took him along the roads round the end of the Mediterranean to that marvelous city whose Temple was to the Jews the center of the whole world—Jerusalem. The father left Saul there in the Temple sitting in the cloisters, and walking in the courts. He had one of the cleverest and best teachers who has ever lived, a man named Gamaliel, whose gifts were only excelled by those of his still more wonderful grandfather, Hillel the Kind. Saul was one of his swiftest, most eager students. When, years later, Saul was thinking about those days,

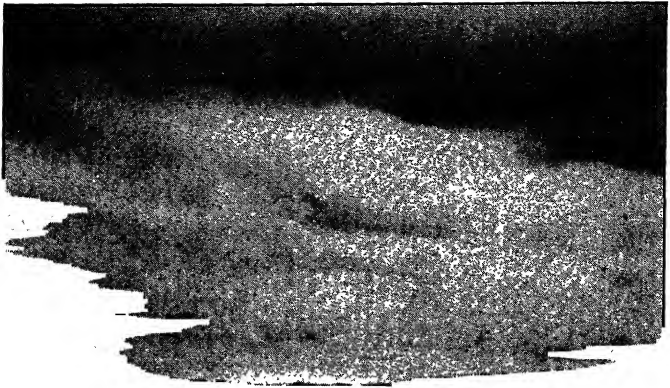
he told people how "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my race, being exceeding zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

We cannot possibly tell whether at any time in those years when Saul was a student in Jerusalem, his path crossed that of another young Man, possibly about three years older than himself, who was called Jesus of Nazareth.

Of all the Jewish people the most enthusiastic in religion and in patriotism were the large group called Pharisees. Saul became a member of this group, of which Gamaliel was the wisest leader. The Pharisees believed that if one man obeyed the whole Law completely for one whole day, the Messiah would come and bring in the Golden Age. Such multitudes of regulations, however, had risen up through the teaching of centuries of rabbis, that it would seem almost impossible that anybody could carry out all the details precisely. The whole story of the Jewish people that we have already followed in this book was woven into the life of Paul; and because he was a Pharisee and so enthusiastic for the Law, an intense hatred grew up in him for those who would defy and deny it.

He learned by heart the terrible words in the Law of Moses about those who defy the Law or deny the authority of Jehovah and blaspheme His name:

"You shall not consent unto him,
Nor listen to him;
Neither shall your eye pity him,
Neither shall you spare,



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

From the Mountains Above Antioch

Looking down the Orontes River to the port from which Paul and Barnabas sailed

"Neither shall you conceal him:
 But you shall surely kill him. . . .
 You shall stone him with stones that he die;
 Because he has tried to draw you
 Away from the Lord your God."

After Saul had graduated in the University of the Temple at Jerusalem so that his feet were on the highway leading him to a rabbiship, he was naturally furious on hearing of a group of men called Nazarenes. They followed the teaching of a country carpenter named Jesus, who had actually suffered the death that was the most accursed of all, being nailed to the Roman gallows, yet who was claimed by them as the Messiah, saying that He had risen from the grave. Saul, the zealous Jew, began to persecute that group of Nazarenes, hailing them to prison, until at last he found himself one day standing by men who took up stones and hurled them at a Nazarene called Stephen, just outside the wall of Jerusalem. Saul put himself at the head of the most vehement persecutors. He secured a letter from a high priest, Caiaphas, giving him authority to make prisoners of all the Nazarenes he could find in the north as far as Damascus. He hurried northward to persecute them; but he was perplexed within his swift-moving sensitive brain by the words that he had heard Stephen say about Jesus. Could there, after all, be any truth in the claim of the Nazarenes?

Saul saw a great light as he journeyed. He fell to the ground; he heard a voice, saying in Hebrew, "I am Jesus," and from that day became the greatest of His

followers. The whole world was changed. Saul still knew that what he had learned as a boy from the rabbis was true; that God is wise and good, and all-powerful. He now believed, however, that serving God meant not just obeying the detailed instructions of the Law, but having love bubbling up like an ever-springing fountain of living water, because the love of God was within his very heart through Jesus Christ. This led Saul into a very difficult struggle with his own closest friends, the other leaders of the people who followed Jesus. Most of them thought of their group, who were soon to be called "Christians," as a cult of the Jews, and believed that in order to join them it was necessary for one to go through some of the ceremonies of the Jewish people, particularly the one called circumcision.

Saul, with his clear-thinking brain and adventurous and daring spirit, realized that all that was canceled out now. The one thing needed was complete discipleship of Christ. He therefore fought and won with difficulty that great battle of freedom from the Law on which, indeed, perhaps the history of the world turned. For, if he had lost it, and if no one else had fought and won it, the followers of Jesus might have died out as a cult of the Jews. Saul took Christianity out from the nationalist flowerpot and planted it in the soil of humanity. He was surely helped in that great achievement by the fact of his being a man of Greek thought who, in Tarsus, where there was a Greek university, had read some Greek poets and had possibly listened to the teachings of philosophers, and who was also a citizen of the whole Roman Em-

pire. He had that wider background of disciplined thought and a world-horizon.

III

We will now trace the second thread—the Greek. As the boy Saul wandered through the streets of Tarsus he saw youths in white tunics and sandals on the marble steps of the university building. In that university, about the time when Saul was born, the greatest Greek teacher in the world, named Athenodorus, had died. Through his fame Tarsus had become one of the great universities of the world. Saul knew that three hundred years before, Alexander the Great had marched through the streets of Tarsus. Here in the temples were statues of Greek gods. On the money with which Saul's father bought him clothes and food were Greek letters. On the bows of the ships in the harbor were Greek names. As Saul started out into the wide world along the Roman roads to tell the good news about Jesus, he came face to face everywhere with Greek ideas and the Greek spirit of beauty; and he spoke and wrote in the Greek language.

When he was in Antioch, he found that the patron god of that city was Apollo, the god of light. When he sailed across to Cyprus, he would hear the legend of how on that very coast, Aphrodite, the goddess of love, arose from the foam of the sea. He might well claim that in the Christ whom he was following Light and Love at last had come to their pure white perfection.

A strange thing happened to him in a city called

Lystra, on the plateau of Asia Minor. He was there with a younger man, who was his assistant in the work; and he had done a wonderful work of healing. The people of Lystra were so excited and full of joy that they went round the streets shouting, "The gods have come down among us." They were quite sure that here were the two gods, Zeus and Hermes (or in the Latin, Jupiter and Mercury), and so the priests of those gods in Lystra brought out oxen to sacrifice to the two apostles as Greek gods.

Again, in the great city of Ephesus, at the other end of Asia Minor, Saul carried on the teaching of an apostle for many months in a lecture hall belonging to a man named Tyrannus. So many people learned from him the uselessness of worshiping images made of terra cotta, or gold, or ivory, or silver, that the craftsmen in Ephesus who made the images of the great Greek goddess Artemis (in Latin, Diana) became furious and tried to kill Saul for robbing them of their livelihood. Ephesus is on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea, and close to its western shore is Athens. Here he came face to face with the very central lighthouse of Greek philosophy and religion, and of the Greek love of beauty. He saw one strange altar on which were carved two words in Greek meaning, "To an Unknown God," and he made this the text of one of his greatest speeches. The address was followed by a vigorous discussion and led to a number of folk deciding to become Christian.

The sporting side of Greek life also keenly interested Saul—or Paul, as he began to be known. Not very many miles from Athens, across an isthmus that

divides the waters of the Aegean from the waters of the Adriatic Sea, he came to the great city of Corinth. On that isthmus there was held, ever so often, one of the greatest sporting events of the whole world at that time. It was known as the Isthmian Games. There boxers and wrestlers struggled, gladiators fought, men ran footraces; and so great was the competition that young men came from all over the Greek world. Often the winner of the greatest of the events would have his statue made by his admirers. Curiously enough, the most valued prize of all was simply a wreath of leaves, cut by a priest with a golden knife from trees in a sacred grove. This wreath was put by the priest on the head of the winner. So the champion of the games would go back to his little town somewhere among the Greek hills, and all the people would cheer him as they saw the narrow, withering leaves of the wreath on his head. When Paul later on wrote to the people at Corinth he spoke about this, saying to them that they also should go into training and run a race, but that they should run it not for a wreath of leaves that withered, but for an eternal crown.

So, speaking the Greek language and meeting everywhere people influenced by Greek ways of thought, Paul was able to convey to people in the great strategic centers of the Roman Empire the good news of which he was the messenger. It was through this medium of Greek that the message proclaimed by Jesus in the dialect of a little Jewish group found its way into the great world, and has come down to ourselves in the Greek New Testament.

IV

If, however, it was Paul's Jewish heart and brain expressing itself in Greek speech that liberated the message, it was in a world made peaceful by Roman rule and given communications over sea and land by the strong Roman hand that actual physical passage was given to the message.

When the boy's father at Tarsus decided to name him Saul, after the great king-hero of their tribe, he also, because he was a Roman citizen, gave him a parallel or Roman name of Paul.

As the boy walked through the streets of Corinth he saw soldiers bearing the Roman armor and knew that even the money was stamped by order of the Roman ruler, and had on it the image of the Roman emperor. When he sailed out to the island of Cyprus and spoke in the city of Paphos, he was brought face to face with the Roman pro-consul bearing his own name. The very first speech that he was ever to make to a Roman ruler was this one to Sergius Paulus, and it is interesting that this is the first place in the narrative of Acts where Saul is called Paul.

As we pass with him along the Roman roads from city to city, we find him coming again and again into contact with Roman rule. For instance, in the city of Philippi we discover how muddled and confused in mind some of the Roman officials were as to what to do, face to face with Paul and his teaching. He had been teaching some time in Philippi and was followed by a slave girl who had a gift of fortunetelling, as we should say. She cried out aloud in the street as Paul

and his colleagues went along: "These men are slaves of the most high God. They tell you the way of salvation." She kept on doing this until Paul turned round and speaking to the spirit that mastered her, called, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I order you out of her." The girl could no longer do her fortune-telling. The masters who owned her were very angry with Paul because this meant that they would lose the money she had been earning; so they shouted after Paul and Silas, his friend, and dragged them to the Roman rulers, called praetors. The men complained to the praetors that Paul and Silas were teaching people to disobey Roman law, so the praetors, without asking them to make any defense, ordered them to be stripped and thrashed with Roman rods. The next morning after there had been an earthquake the praetors sent word to release them. Paul said: "No. They flogged us in public in the forum without a trial. They threw us into prison. Now they are going to get rid of us secretly. We are Roman citizens. Let them come themselves and take us out." The praetors were now panic-stricken, knowing that if the emperor heard that they had flogged Roman citizens, they themselves would lose their positions, so they came and took Paul and Silas by the hand and led them out.

Again in Corinth we find Paul face to face with another and a very different Roman ruler named Gallio. He was not fussily anxious, as the men at Philippi had been, to show his authority. He was the brother of a very famous author named Seneca, and was a very detached, cold-spirited man. He simply

drove the Jews back when they tried to get him to beat Paul. He refused, on the one hand, to beat Paul, and, on the other hand, he refused to stop the Greeks from beating Sosthenes, the leader of the Jews, who had stirred up the row. Gallio cared for none of these things. But we see in the case of Gallio, as of Lysias and of Sergius Paulus, that, generally speaking, Rome stood as a protection for Paul against the violence of the hate of the Jews. This was most of all true in the case of Lysias at Jerusalem, where—as we read from the story at the opening of this chapter—a number of Jews had bound themselves by a solemn oath not to touch food until they had killed Paul. Lysias ordered out a whole body of Roman troops, who conducted Paul from Jerusalem to the citadel at Caesarea, where Paul put his case before Felix, the governor who had succeeded Pontius Pilate, and, two years later, before Festus who followed him. It was there at Caesarea that Paul uttered the fateful words, “I appeal to Caesar.” This was the right of any accused Roman citizen.

So it came about that later on he was put on board ship to sail to Rome, and passed through the thrilling adventure of the tempest and the shipwreck, until at last he walked up the Appian Way from the Bay of Naples and reached Rome itself. There, in a hired house, he was constantly guarded by a Roman sentinel and bore the chains of a prisoner, facts that he mentions once or twice in his letters. He remained, however, completely unquelled in spirit. He wrote letters in Greek which were carried over the Roman roads by his younger followers, and by his side was the

physician Luke, from the Greek city of Troy, who wrote the record that we have of the life of Paul in the book of Acts.

Paul told his message to all the people whom he met, even to his guards.

"Through the whole praetorian guard," said Paul, "and everywhere else it is recognized that I am a prisoner on account of my connection with Christ. . . . The outcome of all this I know will be my release. . . . My eager desire and hope is that I may never feel ashamed, but that now as ever I may do honor to Christ in my own person by fearless courage! . . . Stand firm in a common spirit, fighting side by side like one man for the faith of the gospel. Never be scared for a second by your opponents."

So even Roman soldiers became Christians; and it is almost certain that the very first Christians in England were not the missionaries but the soldiers from Rome.

There is no actual record of what happened at the end. The last words that we have from him are: "This salutation is in my own hand, from Paul. Remember I am in prison. Grace be with you."

It is probable that his life was ended by the sword of a Roman executioner, for, in appealing to Caesar, he appealed to Nero, the emperor who, even in the very year when Paul appealed to Caesar, had murdered his own mother, Agrippina.

Paul's lifework launched the message of Jesus into the great world through the blended gifts of Jewish birth and education, and speech and writing in the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, that is,

112 THE WORLD IN WHICH JESUS LIVED

Greek; along the roads built by Rome, and the seas freed from piracy by her strong but ruthless hand. We shall now see how he used the common happenings of the law courts, the slave market, and the Roman household to try to convey to the rank and file of the people the truth that he found to be so marvelous that, in spite of all that he could achieve, it "Broke through language and escaped."

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL'S PICTURES FROM LIFE

I

"Remember I am in prison"

THESE are probably the last words that have come to us from the hand of the greatest man who ever lived, Jesus alone excepted. For Paul of Tarsus rises to that stature through that blend of measureless fortitude, daring, and brilliant intellect, incessant labor, and a spirit at white-heat in adventuring all life in revolutionary service of the most creative truth that has ever been given to man.

What Paul did changed the history of the world. He released into the Roman Empire, and so for all men everywhere, an explosive, transforming, living force that even now is only in the early stages of its work. The effect of his work is described by so scholarly and critical a spirit as Doctor Inge as "the greatest achievement in human history." He goes on to say that "the amazing and enduring success of Paul's work may be compared with the conquests of Alexander the Great, though in the reverse direction."

After Christ met him on the road to Damascus, Paul was always trying to find words to express the adventure that had changed his life, and to give those whom he met the chance of sharing the secret of his inextinguishable happiness and limitless liberty. To

pass on his experience to others he went out into the danger and hardship of the incessant journeys that carried him over the mountain passes of the Taurus Range and within range of bandits, under scorching sun and through blizzard and tempest, often half-starved and in rags, earning his bread at the loom of the tentmaker, stoned by fellow Jews, thrashed with Roman rods, shackled in dungeons, yet always without fear—a prisoner, yet rallying and cheering a whole ship's company even when on the verge of shipwreck (2 Corinthians 11. 23-7).

In trying to understand the strange, difficult words that Paul used when attempting to express what he himself called "the unsearchable riches of Christ," we are baffled. These words have been woven through the centuries by erudite scholars, poring over Paul's letters at their desks, into an intellectual system. That is the truth; they do belong to a logical scheme. But really in Paul's own mind they were vivid illustrations snatched by his eager practical mind from the happenings that he saw all round him in the market place, the law court, the home, the racecourse, and the boxing ring. This does not mean that the scholars are wrong in trying to plumb the unfathomable depths of truth in his teaching. It does mean also, however, that we simpler people, faced by the task of understanding and even teaching that truth, should try our best to get back to those pictures with which Paul himself started.

Vivid illustrations from the language of the horse dealer, the farmer, the judge on the bench, the auctioneer with his uplifted hammer, the bank clerk, and



The Olive Harvest in Palestine

the athlete, sprinkle every page of Paul's letters. Our difficulty is that we are not familiar with the Roman market place or the law court, the Greek racing track, or the Jewish merchant's desk of his day. So the words, like "redemption," "reconciliation," "atone-ment," become, for us, technical and abstract.

This man of action, Paul, bursting with energy and flaming with enthusiasm, had discovered a marvelous secret. Life started again, a bright light flooding the whole landscape with sunshine, when the secret was shown to him; a light that gave meaning to everything that the plain man or boy did every day of his life. Paul was longing to tell everybody about it. So he ransacked the daily life round him for pictures that would make it plain to everybody.

II

We are not here thinking mainly of illustrations that are plainly parabolic pictures—like those of the Isthmian games or of the Roman soldiers' armor or boxing. Even here, however, it is significant of his realism that the letter which speaks of the athletic sports is written to Corinth, within sight of the Isthmus itself which gave its name to them, and that he weaves into his illustration such vivid and significant elements as the wreath which was cut by a priest with a golden knife from trees in the sacred grove near the edge of the Gulf of Corinth where the Temple of Neptune, the sea-god, stood (1 Corinthians 9. 24-7).

"Every man entering for an athletic contest," says Paul, "goes into thorough training. Now they do this

to win a wreath of leaves that will wither; but we for a wreath that cannot fade."

Our business here is, rather, with those words that are today so fossilized and so encrusted with a theological deposit that we have lost the living thing that Paul saw and that he used to illustrate his passionate plea.

Again and again in his travels Paul was bound to come in sight of that common scene of the Roman Empire, a slave market. In that market he saw men and women, boys and girls "knocked down" by the auctioneer to the highest bidder. Some of those whom he saw in these markets may well have come in chains across Europe from the British Isles. The British prince, Caractacus, for instance, was taken as the greatest among many prisoners from Britain to Rome in the year when Paul's second journey from Jerusalem started (50 A. D.). Boadicea's rebellion in Britain was crushed some eleven years later when Paul was a prisoner himself in Rome and was probably writing his letters to the people at Colossae, Ephesus, and Philippi, as well as to Philemon. Batches of British slaves were transported to Rome throughout that period; while other Britons became legionary soldiers and even officers in the imperial army.

Watching such a slave market and listening to the talk around him, Paul saw with painful clearness how he himself had been a slave before he met Jesus. He was a slave because he lived in a world that was governed, as he believed, by a just God on the judgment seat demanding obedience to Law. Suddenly, meet-

ing Christ, he discovered that the world is a home where God is Father and the Law is Love. Not a slave to the Law but a son of the Father, through Christ.

We turn to Paul's own letters and find in a single sentence two words on this subject that were full of thrilling realism to the people to whom Paul wrote and spoke in the cities that were strung along the Grand Trunk Road from Antioch to Ephesus. The sentence is as follows: "Waiting for our *adoption*, to wit, the *redemption* of our body."

Those phrases which go past most twentieth-century ears leaving us cold made the ears of many of Paul's listeners tingle. For they had gone through that very experience of being Roman slaves and becoming free. What, then, was the picture conjured up in the first-century mind in the Roman Empire? The word that Paul uses ἀπολύτρωσις (*apolutrosis*), which we translate "redemption," was the law-court word for the process of buying the freedom of slaves. If you were a Briton or a Gaul taken captive by the Roman soldiers in Boadicea's rebellion, you could be turned over by the soldiery to the slave traders in Rome or Marseilles and sold by auction to some ship-owner. So you were doomed to a lifelong bondage forced to tear your very heart out under the lash tugging at the galley oars. Supposing, however, that, as you stood on the slave block waiting to be knocked down to the highest bidder, you saw the face of a friend (say some Briton who had become a centurion and a man of property) who bid against all the others and at great sacrifice to himself, bought you, and hav-

ing done so, made you free; imagine your dancing joy as a prisoner released out of the horrors of slavery into happy lifelong freedom by the sacrifice paid by some fellow national or relative. The word "redemption" would describe the lovely deed that your friend had achieved at such sacrifice. His sacrifice gave you freedom and joy instead of slavery, the lash, and the galleys. How true and how moving a picture this word carried, with its story of leaping from slavery to freedom through the love of one ready to pay a great price in order to give that liberty to a serf, is shown by the large number of times that Paul used it. (Galatians 3. 13; 4. 5; Titus 2. 14; Romans 3. 24; 8. 23; 1 Timothy 2. 6; 1 Corinthians 6. 20; 7. 23; 2 Corinthians 1. 30; Ephesians 1. 7, 14; 4. 30; Colossians 1. 14.)

A still more splendid deed was often done in the Roman Empire. A boy who had been born a slave, the child of a slave mother on the owner's farm or in his house, might become not only so trusted by his master, but so loved by him because of his skill, charm, or honesty, that the owner would actually free him from his condition of slavery, sometimes paying a redemption price before the legal officer. The owner would at times go even farther; he would give the freed slave his own name and adopt him into his family as his son; so that he would live in the house as one of the children of the father. As a result of this adoption the one-time slave became an heir to his new father's estate. So Paul's use of the word *υιοθεσία* (*wiōthesia*) (Romans 8. 15, 23; Galatians 4. 5; Ephesians 1. 5), "adoption," brought to his readers

and listeners that picture of the slave not only "bought with a price" and made free, but also actually adopted into the family as son and heir. Some of the people to whom Paul was writing in Ephesus and Corinth, Colossae, and elsewhere, actually either were slaves or were freed slaves. To them these words, "bond servant" or "slave," "redemption," and "adoption," "inheritance," and so on, did not suggest the difficult theological ideas that often baffle us, but thrilling realities that changed life. From the misery of shackles in the slave huts to the joy of comradeship with the other boys and girls at the father's table; that is what "Waiting for our 'adoption,' to wit, the 'redemption' of our body!" meant to them.

Even that picture, happy and exciting as it was, did not convey fully the joy that made Paul's pulses throb as he tried to tell how this was exactly what had happened to himself. When he had gone, hurrying up the road to Damascus, frenzied with hate against the "Christians," Paul was sure that he was under the Law of Moses, having to slave away his life in detail in obedience to a thousand commands, and only by that detailed carrying out of the Law could he win the approval of the Lord Jehovah. Suddenly he discovered, before he reached Damascus, that God is a Father who so loves His children, of whom Paul was one, that He sent His Son, the portrait ("express image") of Himself, to bring these children back to Himself.

This brings us, then, to another word that Paul employs to try to catch, in pictures, the "inexpressible riches" of what he had discovered to be the meaning

of life; the word that theologians call "atonement" or "reconciliation." The Greek word *καταλλαγή* (*katallagee*) that Paul uses is translated "atonement" only once in the Authorized Version of the English Bible and not at all in the Revised New Testament. It is there translated always as "reconciliation."

What is the picture lying behind this word for "reconciliation"? Originally the Greek word had to do with money-changing. If you had so many Roman coins and at the Temple in Jerusalem changed them into the equivalent in Temple shekels, this word *καταλλαγή* described the transaction. By the time Jesus and Paul lived, however, it came to have a special meaning in ordinary conversation. Suppose that you and a friend have quarreled over some property or over a business "deal" in which one of you has not been straight with the other and has—as we say—"bested" him. The one of you who has wronged the other can come frankly forward and say that he has been in the wrong and that he will pay the balance and settle the difference between you. This means, in cash payment, that (in the original meaning of the word) the equivalent has been paid of what has been received. But in Paul's day the actual emphasis in ordinary Greek usage was on the restoring of lost friendship between estranged persons. This changed relationship of persons is what Paul is expressing in that word. Those who were estranged by the wrong done by one to the other have come together again because one of them has taken the first step. Or someone else has stepped in as an intermediary to make them friends. Paul wishes to show

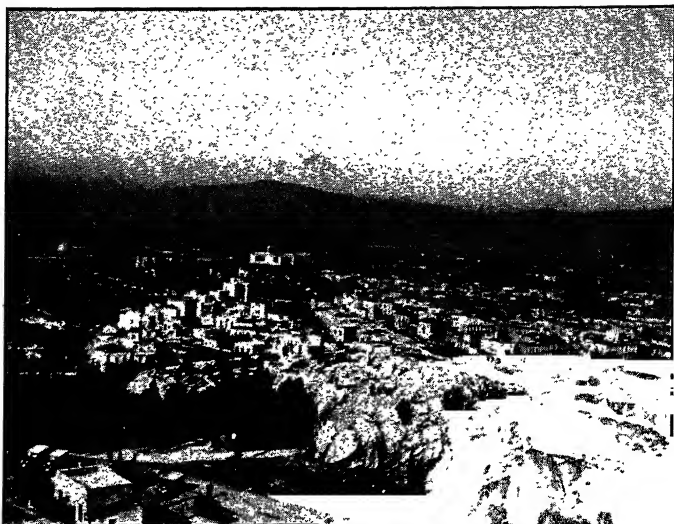
that what Jesus does is to restore right relationship between man and God.

The Graeco-Roman world was full of a wrong idea of the meaning of the universe. There was among all save the few the fear of demons. Magicians, astrologers, and exorcizers of demons flourished, as we see, for instance, from the story of Paul's life in Ephesus. Jesus shows that really the ultimate Power in the universe is friendly; that final Reality is Creative Love, the Father. Thus, as Paul puts it, God was in Jesus reconciling the world to Himself. Jesus paid the price that showed God to man and won man to God, and so changed the relationship from fear to love, from terror to joy, from being slaves of a delusion to being free sons of the house.

The most marvelous thing of all to Paul was that God had specially called him and given him the mission to explain that to the world. So that what we tend to regard as a difficult theological sentence is nothing of the sort. For instance, "God . . . reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5. 18-19) has in it just those three simple pictures. God makes my relation to Him right through Christ; and gives me the work of bringing others into that relationship of love and understanding; God, not reckoning that I had not contributed my share, has canceled that debt and actually trusts me with expressing to the world His longing to bring all

His children into a relationship of love with Himself. Paul, then, goes on with a thrill of happy pride. "So I am Christ's ambassador; his envoy; God is asking you through me to come back into friendship, sonship." Really, then, what Paul is doing is to put the parable of the prodigal son into other words. The estranged youth comes back and puts things right with his father, who—from his side—does not count the boy's "trespasses" but takes him into the home on the full footing of father and son.

Nor was this "ministry of reconciliation" armchair or even pulpit work. Paul pours out the torrent of his adventures in words that tumble over one another to describe the beatings with lashes, the being imprisoned, mobbed, starved, cursed as an impostor, that are a part of that ministry (2 Corinthians 6). He takes a parallel idea from the horse dealer or house agent, as in the phrase, for instance, "the earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1. 14). The picture is one from the market place. The Greek word *ἀρραβών* (*arrhabōn*) is really the equivalent of a payment on deposit, which is an installment and at the same time a pledge guaranteeing that we shall receive full possession. The very same word, which although Greek in form is of Semitic origin, is used today in Palestine, slightly modified by the Arabs, for the money paid in advance on account of, for instance, the hire of a horse for travel. Paul gives us there a picture of the life of the Spirit, already real in us, those who have given themselves to Christ's discipleship, but only an installment of the full life of the kingdom of God that they will enjoy. The same idea is in his



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

Athens, With Mars' Hill in the foreground



Photograph by Elsie H. Spriggs

A Street in Corinth

picture of "the first-fruits of the Spirit"; an advance payment—a few apples from the tree whose branches will bow down with the rich harvest that is ripening (Romans 8. 23).

Over a score of times Paul uses another word that seems to be even more abstract and theological than any we have so far examined—the word "justification." Yet here again Paul is using picture-language from a daily experience of that time. The Greek word that he uses is *δικαίωσις*¹ (*dikiosis*). It comes straight from the law courts. The picture is that of a prisoner on trial awaiting the verdict. He listens for the judgment as to what his punishment shall be. If he is convicted, he will lose his citizenship. He may be condemned to have the skin flayed from his back by the rods of the lictor; or to be chained to the oars as a galley-slave doomed to swing to and fro with cracking muscles to the horrible rhythm of the time-drum; or he may be set to hewing stone out of the quarries and with bleeding hands building a Roman road across a marsh. To the man in that tense misery of anxious waiting, the word suddenly comes "Not guilty"; he is acquitted; a free citizen with no stain on his character. Imagine the joy, astonishment, relief, delight. Acquittal is what the word *δικαίωσις* means.

That happy experience is the center of the picture for Paul. He fixes our attention on the fact of acquittal, of absolution. The man is acquitted here,

¹ Romans 4. 25; 5. 16, 18; 2. 13; 3. 4, 24, 28; 4. 2; 5. 1, 9; 8. 30; 1 Corinthians 4. 4; 6. 11; Galatians 2. 16; 3. 11, 24; 5. 4; 1 Timothy 3. 6.

not because he is really guiltless himself; but because he is a forgiven man acquitted by a loving God. Paul's mind is not so much thinking or speculating about the processes by which the verdict is reached as rejoicing in the fact that he himself has experienced it, and that we can all share it. The man comes to God in the attitude that we call "faith" because a shining transforming intuition has convinced him that in Jesus Christ he sees God's character. That is a thrilling adventure; because when you come to that lively certainty, it changes not only your ideas about yourself but about history; about what man is here on this earth for and about the whole universe. You see that the universe, in spite of all the cruel, ugly appearances with which man defaces it, is friendly, and that Creative Love is at the heart of it.

This leads us to another and even more difficult word that Paul uses in relation to man's acquittal. He speaks of Jesus Christ as our *ἱλαστήριον* (*hilastērion*), which we translate "propitiation." Again Paul is trying by one more picture to throw another gleam of light on the real life that he had discovered; the great experience that he keeps on trying to express although, like all great experiences, it "breaks through language and escapes."

When he went up as a student to sit at the feet of Gamaliel among the pillars under the shadow of the mighty cedar roof of the Temple courts, Saul (as he then was called) used to go on the days of sacrifice with his dove or lamb and take it to the priest. The student Saul walked along up the steps from the Court

of the Gentiles into the Court of Women, and on, following the high priest, to the very door of the Holy of Holies. There he stopped, he was forbidden to go farther in; but the high priest did not stop. Bearing the dove or lamb as sacrifice he went in. He passed through the veil into the presence of the Most High. The lamb carried in there by the high priest was the propitiation; the sacrifice that stood for Saul's access to Jehovah. Paul the Christian was actually living in the strength of the amazing but absolutely certain experience that in Jesus Christ he himself, Paul, went through the veil that hides man from the Eternal and came face to face with God. In this word "propitiation" Paul does not suggest that the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made in His death on the Cross means that He died instead of us to make an angry God forgive us. That idea contradicts everything that Jesus ever said about the love of God; it is the direct opposite of, for instance, the parables of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, the Sermon on the Mount. Nor does the sacrifice merely protect us from the consequences of sinning. What does it do? It takes us straight into the presence of God because it shows us how great His love is. Instead of standing outside while the high priest carries the sacrifice into the presence of the Eternal, Christ leads us straight in with Him. We are face to face with Holy Creative Love. As Paul says: "God proves his love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners" (Romans 5. 8). That love of His (when we not only see it but respond to it with sorrow for having been disobedient, and with our love and active

obedience) has the power to break the sin-shackles that make us prisoners.

So it is not the amount of the agony that Christ suffered nor the depth of the shame that He endured in dying the death of a criminal that makes the foot of the Cross the place of birth into new life: it is the fact that Jesus' love and goodness and courageous loyalty to truth were perfect; a divine obedience to the Father's will. That love and goodness came into head-on collision with the selfishness and hard-heartedness of men (like Annas and Caiaphas) whose careers and wealth would have been destroyed if what Jesus said were taken as true and acted upon. But Jesus did not swerve, so the Cross was inevitable. For the enemies of all that He stood for could not see anything to do other than get Him out of the way; and the Cross (the Roman gallows) was the one available way. On the Cross we see what the selfishness of ordinary men costs a God who is Love and Goodness; we see the lengths to which that love and goodness of God will go to bring man back to loving relationship with Himself. We see also on the Cross the perfect love which that Eternal Creative Love wishes to see realized in the boys and girls, the men and women of the world.

This brings us to another difficult word of Paul's: "sanctification," with its sister word, "saints." The first instinct of the average person, even if he calls himself a Christian, is to feel that this notion of "saints" and "sanctification" has nothing to do with him; he is not likely ever to reach anything approaching saintliness.

The Greek word that Paul employs, however (*ἁγιασμός*), and that we translate "sanctification," was used in his day to describe, for example, thousands of girls who every year at Corinth "dedicated" their purity to Aphrodite, the goddess of sensual love, whose temple and nunnery (if we can use that word), crowded with these maidens, crowned the steep flat-topped mountain of the Acro-Corinth. Similarly, at a wedding the bride and the bridegroom were covered with a veil to show that they were "dedicated" or "set apart" to each other and to the mysteries of marriage. In the city of Ephesus where Paul lived and taught for three years, every May (the month sacred to Artemis, or "Diana of the Ephesians") those who devoted their lives to the service of the goddess walked through the streets dressed in pure white robes, dedicated, sanctified to Diana.

So the word in Paul's mind simply means one who is dedicated to God, one who has decided to give his life to Christ. If you read the letters that Paul wrote, you can see that the people who were thus "dedicated"—the saints—that is, rank and file of the Christians, fell into the most dreadful sins. They were no more perfect than we are; but they were in the relation of disciples or followers of Jesus Christ. If we read the passages in which Paul uses these words (for example, 1 Corinthians 1. 2, 30; 6. 11; 7. 14; 1 Thessalonians 4. 3, 4, 7; 2 Thessalonians 2. 13; Romans 15. 16; Ephesians 5. 26) we shall see that he has in mind the experience and the attitude of a person "dedicated" to another person or to an ideal of life. It is precisely what happened to a nineteenth-century

young man walking home across the fields after an all-night dance as he looked into the sunrise.

"The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng
Of maids and youths, old men and matrons staid,
A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms and tapers glittering,
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
Whose transient pleasures mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling not unseen from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapors, and the melody of birds,
And laborers going forth to till the fields,
Ah! need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated spirit. On I walked,
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.
Strange rendezvous!"

Faithfulness to that call at that hour gave to the world the joy and strength that came from Wordsworth's immortal poetry. That is "sanctification."

One day a slave girl who told fortunes and thus earned money for her owners came hurrying after Paul and his companion as they walked down the streets of a Greek city. "These men are slaves of the Most High God," she cried; "they tell you the way of salvation." She herself was the slave of men and told fortunes; these men were the slaves of God and told the secret of deliverance from evil and the achievement of immortal life. The word *σωτηρία* (*sōtēria*) that she used was at the center of Paul's teaching. Along the roadsides of Asia Minor and of Greece frequent carved stones were standing with words like these:

Metrophilos son of Asklepas with his wife Ammia for their own and their family's and the crop's and the village's salvation to Zeus the Thunderer a vow.¹

The thousands of these stones that were on the roads of the empire registering vows to one or other of their gods and prayer for *sōtēria* showed how greatly the common people wanted this strange but very real thing that they called "salvation" or deliverance. In its ordinary use it had to do with bodily health and general welfare. Indeed, in every city of the Roman Empire what are called "mystery" religions or "cults" were flourishing because men wanted the *sōtēria* that these cults promised. Mystic ceremonials or sacraments brought (they said) the very life of the god of the cult into the devotee himself. So the power of

¹ See Ramsay's *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, p. 86, and the author's *Paul the Dauntless*, Chap. XIX, for a reproduction of this stone.

evil over the man was broken and he became immortal as the god was immortal. This conquest of evil and deliverance from the fear of death by union with the god were at the heart of the desire for salvation. Men wanted what we all need, deliverance from dread into joy, from futility into power, from disease into health, from loneliness into fellowship, from slavery into freedom.

All those mystery religions are dead: they are "museum-pieces" interesting to the historian. They are so because they were not true. Their gods were simply not there; so they could not save or deliver. The teaching that Paul carried into those same Roman cities has, however, not only lived but has created all down the centuries and today creates all across the world a living community of men and women of every nation under heaven. This triumph comes from the fact that God the Father is—really is; and has, through Christ, released His strength and love to make us strong and free. In differing degrees of intensity they share Paul's experience that in the face of Jesus Christ we see the picture—the express image or the human face—of the Father and know that we can come out of all slaveries into free sonship in Him.

